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THE WRITINGS OF OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

IN THIRTEEN VOLUMES

VOLUME XII.

THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOLUME II

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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POEMS OF THE CLASS OF '29

1851–1889

BILL AND JOE

COME, dear old comrade, you and I
Will steal an hour from days gone by,
The shining days when life was new,
And all was bright with morning dew,
The lusty days of long ago,
When you were Bill and I was Joe.

Your name may flaunt a titled trail
Proud as a cockerel's rainbow tail,
And mine as brief appendix wear
As Tam O'Shanter's luckless mare;
To-day, old friend, remember still
That I am Joe and you are Bill.

You 've won the great world's envied prize,
And grand you look in people's eyes,
With H O N. and L L. D.
In big brave letters, fair to see, —
Your fist, old fellow! off they go! —
How are you, Bill? How are you, Joe?

You 've worn the judge's ermined robe;
You 've taught your name to half the globe;
You 've sung mankind a deathless strain;
You 've made the dead past live again:
The world may call you what it will,
But you and I are Joe and Bill.

The chaffing young folks stare and say
"See those old buffers, bent and gray, —
They talk like fellows in their teens!
Mad, poor old boys! That 's what it means," —
And shake their heads; they little know
The throbbing hearts of Bill and Joe! —

How Bill forgets his hour of pride,
While Joe sits smiling at his side;
How Joe, in spite of time's disguise,
Finds the old schoolmate in his eyes, —
Those calm, stern eyes that melt and fill
As Joe looks fondly up at Bill.

Ah, pensive scholar, what is fame?
A fitful tongue of leaping flame;
A giddy whirlwind's fickle gust,
That lifts a pinch of mortal dust;
A few swift years, and who can show
Which dust was Bill and which was Joe?

The weary idol takes his stand,
Holds out his bruised and aching hand,
While gaping thousands come and go, —
How vain it seems, this empty show!

Till all at once his pulses thrill; —
'T is poor old Joe's "God bless you, Bill!"

And shall we breathe in happier spheres
The names that pleased our mortal ears;
In some sweet lull of harp and song
For earth-born spirits none too long,
Just whispering of the world below
Where this was Bill and that was Joe?

No matter; while our home is here
No sounding name is half so dear;
When fades at length our lingering day,
Who cares what pompous tombstones say?
Read on the hearts that love us still,
Hic jacet Joe. *Hic jacet* Bill.

A SONG OF "TWENTY-NINE"

1851

THE summer dawn is breaking
  On Auburn's tangled bowers,
The golden light is waking
  On Harvard's ancient towers;
    The sun is in the sky
    That must see us do or die,
  Ere it shine on the line
    Of the CLASS OF '29.

At last the day is ended,
  The tutor screws no more,

By doubt and fear attended
Each hovers round the door,
Till the good old Præses cries,
While the tears stand in his eyes,
"You have passed, and are classed
With the BOYS OF '29."

Not long are they in making
The college halls their own,
Instead of standing shaking,
Too bashful to be known;
But they kick the Seniors' shins
Ere the second week begins,
When they stray in the way
Of the BOYS OF '29.

If a jolly set is trolling
The last *Der Freischutz* airs,
Or a "cannon bullet" rolling
Comes bouncing down the stairs,
The tutors, looking out,
Sigh, "Alas! there is no doubt,
'T is the noise of the Boys
Of the CLASS OF '29."

Four happy years together,
By storm and sunshine tried,
In changing wind and weather,
They rough it side by side,
Till they hear their Mother cry,
"You are fledged, and you must fly,"
And the bell tolls the knell
Of the days of '29.

Since then, in peace or trouble,
  Full many a year has rolled,
And life has counted double
  The days that then we told;
    Yet we 'll end as we 've begun,
    For though scattered, we are one,
  While each year sees us here,
    Round the board of '29.

Though fate may throw between us
  The mountains or the sea,
No time shall ever wean us,
  No distance set us free;
    But around the yearly board,
    When the flaming pledge is poured,
  It shall claim every name
    On the roll of '29.

To yonder peaceful ocean
  That glows with sunset fires,
Shall reach the warm emotion
  This welcome day inspires,
    Beyond the ridges cold
    Where a brother toils for gold,
  Till it shine through the mine
    Round the BOY OF '29.

If one whom fate has broken
  Shall lift a moistened eye,
We 'll say, before he 's spoken —
  "Old Classmate, don't you cry!
    Here, take the purse I hold,
    There 's a tear upon the gold —

It was mine — it is thine —
A'n't we BOYS OF '29?"

As nearer still and nearer
The fatal stars appear,
The living shall be dearer
With each encircling year,
Till a few old men shall say,
"We remember 't is the day —
Let it pass with a glass
For the CLASS OF '29."

As one by one is falling
Beneath the leaves or snows,
Each memory still recalling,
The broken ring shall close,
Till the nightwinds softly pass
O'er the green and growing grass,
Where it waves on the graves
Of the BOYS OF '29!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1852

WHERE, oh where are the visions of morning,
Fresh as the dews of our prime?
Gone, like tenants that quit without warning,
Down the back entry of time.

Where, oh where are life's lilies and roses,
Nursed in the golden dawn's smile?

Dead as the bulrushes round little Moses,
On the old banks of the Nile.

Where are the Marys, and Anns, and Elizas,
Loving and lovely of yore?
Look in the columns of old Advertisers, —
Married and dead by the score.

Where the gray colts and the ten-year-old fillies,
Saturday's triumph and joy?
Gone, like our friend πόδας ὠκὺς Achilles,
Homer's ferocious old boy.

Die-away dreams of ecstatic emotion,
Hopes like young eagles at play,
Vows of unheard-of and endless devotion,
How ye have faded away!

Yet, through the ebbing of Time's mighty river
Leave our young blossoms to die,
Let him roll smooth in his current forever,
Till the last pebble is dry.

AN IMPROMPTU

Not premeditated

1853

THE clock has struck noon; ere it thrice tell the hours
We shall meet round the table that blushes with flowers,

And I shall blush deeper with shame-driven blood
That I came to the banquet and brought not a bud.

Who cares that his verse is a beggar in art
If you see through its rags the full throb of his heart?
Who asks if his comrade is battered and tanned
When he feels his warm soul in the clasp of his hand?

No! be it an epic, or be it a line,
The Boys will all love it because it is mine;
I sung their last song on the morn of the day
That tore from their lives the last blossom of May.

It is not the sunset that glows in the wine,
But the smile that beams over it, makes it divine;
I scatter these drops, and behold, as they fall,
The day-star of memory shines through them all!

And these are the last; they are drops that I stole
From a wine-press that crushes the life from the soul,
But they ran through my heart and they sprang to my brain
Till our twentieth sweet summer was smiling again!

THE OLD MAN DREAMS

1854

OH for one hour of youthful joy!
Give back my twentieth spring!
I 'd rather laugh, a bright-haired boy,
Than reign, a gray-beard king.

Off with the spoils of wrinkled age!
Away with Learning's crown!
Tear out life's Wisdom-written page,
And dash its trophies down!

One moment let my life-blood stream
From boyhood's fount of flame!
Give me one giddy, reeling dream
Of life all love and fame!

My listening angel heard the prayer,
And, calmly smiling, said,
"If I but touch thy silvered hair
Thy hasty wish hath sped.

"But is there nothing in thy track,
To bid thee fondly stay,
While the swift seasons hurry back
To find the wished-for day?"

"Ah, truest soul of womankind!
Without thee what were life?
One bliss I cannot leave behind:
I 'll take — my — precious — wife!"

The angel took a sapphire pen
And wrote in rainbow dew,
The man would be a boy again,
And be a husband too!

"And is there nothing yet unsaid,
Before the change appears?
Remember, all their gifts have fled
With those dissolving years."

"Why, yes;" for memory would recall
My fond paternal joys;
"I could not bear to leave them all —
I 'll take — my — girl — and — boys."

The smiling angel dropped his pen, —
"Why, this will never do;
The man would be a boy again,
And be a father too!"

And so I laughed, — my laughter woke
The household with its noise, —
And wrote my dream, when morning broke,
To please the gray-haired boys.

REMEMBER — FORGET

1855

And what shall be the song to-night,
If song there needs must be?
If every year that brings us here
Must steal an hour from me?

Say, shall it ring a merry peal,
  Or heave a mourning sigh
O'er shadows cast, by years long past,
  On moments flitting by?

Nay, take the first unbidden line
  The idle hour may send,
No studied grace can mend the face
  That smiles as friend on friend;
The balsam oozes from the pine,
  The sweetness from the rose,
And so, unsought, a kindly thought
  Finds language as it flows.

The years rush by in sounding flight,
  I hear their ceaseless wings;
Their songs I hear, some far, some near,
  And thus the burden rings:
"The morn has fled, the noon has past,
  The sun will soon be set,
The twilight fade to midnight shade;
  Remember — and Forget!"

Remember all that time has brought —
  The starry hope on high,
The strength attained, the courage gained,
  The love that cannot die.
Forget the bitter, brooding thought, —
  The word too harshly said,
The living blame love hates to name,
  The frailties of the dead!

We have been younger, so they say,
But let the seasons roll,
He doth not lack an almanac
Whose youth is in his soul.
The snows may clog life's iron track,
But does the axle tire,
While bearing swift through bank and drift
The engine's heart of fire?

I lift a goblet in my hand;
If good old wine it hold,
An ancient skin to keep it in
Is just the thing, we 're told.
We 're grayer than the dusty flask,—
We 're older than our wine;
Our corks reveal the "white top" seal,
The stamp of '29.

Ah, Boys! we clustered in the dawn,
To sever in the dark;
A merry crew, with loud halloo,
We climbed our painted bark;
We sailed her through the four years' cruise,
We 'll sail her to the last,
Our dear old flag, though but a rag,
Still flying on her mast.

So gliding on, each winter's gale
Shall pipe us all on deck,
Till, faint and few, the gathering crew
Creep o'er the parting wreck,

Her sails and streamers spread aloft
To fortune's rain or shine,
Till storm or sun shall all be one,
And down goes TWENTY-NINE!

OUR INDIAN SUMMER

1856

YOU 'll believe me, dear boys, 't is a pleasure to rise,
With a welcome like this in your darling old eyes;
To meet the same smiles and to hear the same tone
Which have greeted me oft in the years that have flown.

Were I gray as the grayest old rat in the wall,
My locks would turn brown at the sight of you all;
If my heart were as dry as the shell on the sand,
It would fill like the goblet I hold in my hand.

There are noontides of autumn when summer returns.
Though the leaves are all garnered and sealed in their urns,
And the bird on his perch, that was silent so long,
Believes the sweet sunshine and breaks into song.

We have caged the young birds of our beautiful June;
Their plumes are still bright and their voices in tune;

One moment of sunshine from faces like these
And they sing as they sung in the green-growing
trees.

The voices of morning! how sweet is their thrill
When the shadows have turned, and the evening
grows still!
The text of our lives may get wiser with age,
But the print was so fair on its twentieth page!

Look off from your goblet and up from your plate,
Come, take the last journal, and glance at its date:
Then think what we fellows should say and should
do,
If the 6 were a 9 and the 5 were a 2.

Ah, no! for the shapes that would meet with us
here,
From the far land of shadows, are ever too dear!
Though youth flung around us its pride and its
charms,
We should see but the comrades we clasped in our
arms.

A health to our future — a sigh for our past,
We love, we remember, we hope to the last;
And for all the base lies that the almanacs hold,
While we 've youth in our hearts we can never
grow old!

MARE RUBRUM

1858

FLASH out a stream of blood-red wine,
For I would drink to other days,
And brighter shall their memory shine,
Seen flaming through its crimson blaze!
The roses die, the summers fade,
But every ghost of boyhood's dream
By nature's magic power is laid
To sleep beneath this blood-red stream!

It filled the purple grapes that lay,
And drank the splendors of the sun,
Where the long summer's cloudless day
Is mirrored in the broad Garonne;
It pictures still the bacchant shapes
That saw their hoarded sunlight shed, —
The maidens dancing on the grapes, —
Their milk-white ankles splashed with red.

Beneath these waves of crimson lie,
In rosy fetters prisoned fast,
Those flitting shapes that never die, —
The swift-winged visions of the past.
Kiss but the crystal's mystic rim,
Each shadow rends its flowery chain,
Springs in a bubble from its brim,
And walks the chambers of the brain.

Poor beauty! Time and fortune's wrong
No shape nor feature may withstand;

Thy wrecks are scattered all along,
  Like emptied sea-shells on the sand;
Yet, sprinkled with this blushing rain,
  The dust restores each blooming girl,
As if the sea-shells moved again
  Their glistening lips of pink and pearl.

Here lies the home of school-boy life,
  With creaking stair and wind-swept hall,
And, scarred by many a truant knife,
  Our old initials on the wall;
Here rest, their keen vibrations mute,
  The shout of voices known so well,
The ringing laugh, the wailing flute,
  The chiding of the sharp-tongued bell.

Here, clad in burning robes, are laid
  Life's blossomed joys, untimely shed,
And here those cherished forms have strayed
  We miss awhile, and call them dead.
What wizard fills the wondrous glass?
  What soil the enchanted clusters grew?
That buried passions wake and pass
  In beaded drops of fiery dew?

Nay, take the cup of blood-red wine, —
  Our hearts can boast a warmer glow,
Filled from a vintage more divine,
  Calmed, but not chilled, by winter's snow!
To-night the palest wave we sip
  Rich as the priceless draught shall be
That wet the bride of Cana's lip, —
  The wedding wine of Galilee!

THE BOYS

1859

HAS there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?
If there has, take him out, without making a noise.
Hang the Almanac's cheat and the Catalogue's spite!
Old Time is a liar! We 're twenty to-night!

We 're twenty! We 're twenty! Who says we are more?
He 's tipsy, — young jackanapes! — show him the door!
"Gray temples at twenty?" — Yes! *white* if we please;
Where the snow-flakes fall thickest there 's nothing can freeze!

Was it snowing I spoke of? Excuse the mistake!
Look close, — you will see not a sign of a flake!
We want some new garlands for those we have shed, —
And these are white roses in place of the red.

We 've a trick, we young fellows, you may have been told,
Of talking (in public) as if we were old: —
That boy we call "Doctor," and this we call "Judge;"
It 's a neat little fiction, — of course it 's all fudge.

That fellow's the "Speaker," — the one on the right;
"Mr. Mayor," my young one, how are you to-night?
That 's our "Member of Congress," we say when we chaff;
There 's the "Reverend" What 's his name? — don't make me laugh.

That boy with the grave mathematical look
Made believe he had written a wonderful book,
And the ROYAL SOCIETY thought it was *true!*
So they chose him right in; a good joke it was, too!

There 's a boy, we pretend, with a three-decker brain,
That could harness a team with a logical chain;
When he spoke for our manhood in syllabled fire,
We called him "The Justice," but now he 's "The Squire."

And there 's a nice youngster of excellent pith, —
Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith;
But he shouted a song for the brave and the free, —
Just read on his medal, "My country," "of thee!"

You hear that boy laughing? — You think he 's all fun;
But the angels laugh, too, at the good he has done;
The children laugh loud as they troop to his call,
And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all!

Yes, we 're boys, — always playing with tongue or with pen,—
And I sometimes have asked, — Shall we ever be men?
Shall we always be youthful, and laughing, and gay,
Till the last dear companion drops smiling away?

Then here 's to our boyhood, its gold and its gray!
The stars of its winter, the dews of its May!
And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,
Dear Father, take care of thy children, THE BOYS!

LINES

1860

I 'M ashamed, — that 's the fact, — it 's a pitiful case, —
Won't any kind classmate get up in my place?
Just remember how often I 've risen before, —
I blush as I straighten my legs on the floor!

There are stories, once pleasing, too many times told, —
There are beauties once charming, too fearfully old, —
There are voices we 've heard till we know them so well,
Though they talked for an hour they 'd have nothing to tell.

Yet, Classmates! Friends! Brothers! Dear blessed
old boys!
Made one by a lifetime of sorrows and joys,
What lips have such sounds as the poorest of these,
Though honeyed, like Plato's, by musical bees?

What voice is so sweet and what greeting so dear
As the simple, warm welcome that waits for us
here?
The love of our boyhood still breathes in its tone,
And our hearts throb the answer, "He 's one of our
own!"

Nay! count not our numbers; some sixty we know,
But these are above, and those under the snow;
And thoughts are still mingled wherever we meet
For those we remember with those that we greet.

We have rolled on life's journey, — how fast and
how far!
One round of humanity's many-wheeled car,
But up-hill and down-hill, through rattle and rub,
Old, true Twenty-niners! we 've stuck to our hub!

While a brain lives to think, or a bosom to feel,
We will cling to it still like the spokes of a wheel!
And age, as it chills us, shall fasten the tire
That youth fitted round in his circle of fire!

A VOICE OF THE LOYAL NORTH

1861

(JANUARY THIRD)

We sing "Our Country's" song to-night
With saddened voice and eye;
Her banner droops in clouded light
Beneath the wintry sky.
We 'll pledge her once in golden wine
Before her stars have set:
Though dim one reddening orb may shine,
We have a Country yet.

'T were vain to sigh o'er errors past,
The fault of sires or sons;
Our soldier heard the threatening blast,
And spiked his useless guns;
He saw the star-wreathed ensign fall,
By mad invaders torn;
But saw it from the bastioned wall
That laughed their rage to scorn!

What though their angry cry is flung
Across the howling wave, —
They smite the air with idle tongue
The gathering storm who brave;
Enough of speech! the trumpet rings;
Be silent, patient, calm, —
God help them if the tempest swings
The pine against the palm!

Our toilsome years have made us tame;
  Our strength has slept unfelt;
The furnace-fire is slow to flame
  That bids our ploughshares melt;
'T is hard to lose the bread they win
  In spite of Nature's frowns, —
To drop the iron threads we spin
  That weave our web of towns,

To see the rusting turbines stand
  Before the emptied flumes,
To fold the arms that flood the land
  With rivers from their looms, —
But harder still for those who learn
  The truth forgot so long;
When once their slumbering passions burn,
  The peaceful are the strong!

The Lord have mercy on the weak,
  And calm their frenzied ire,
And save our brothers ere they shriek,
  "We played with Northern fire!"
The eagle hold his mountain height, —
  The tiger pace his den!
Give all their country, each his right!
  God keep us all! Amen!

J. D. R.

1862

THE friends that are, and friends that were,
What shallow waves divide!
I miss the form for many a year
Still seated at my side.

I miss him, yet I feel him still
Amidst our faithful band,
As if not death itself could chill
The warmth of friendship's hand.

His story other lips may tell, —
For me the veil is drawn;
I only knew he loved me well,
He loved me — and is gone!

VOYAGE OF THE GOOD SHIP UNION

1862

'T IS midnight: through my troubled dream
Loud wails the tempest's cry;
Before the gale, with tattered sail,
A ship goes plunging by.
What name? Where bound? — The rocks around
Repeat the loud halloo.
—The good ship Union, Southward bound:
God help her and her crew!

And is the old flag flying still
That o'er your fathers flew,
With bands of white and rosy light,
And field of starry blue?
— Ay! look aloft! its folds full oft
Have braved the roaring blast,
And still shall fly when from the sky
This black typhoon has past!

Speak, pilot of the storm-tost bark!
May I thy peril share?
— O landsman, there are fearful seas
The brave alone may dare!
— Nay, ruler of the rebel deep,
What matters wind or wave?
The rocks that wreck your reeling deck
Will leave me naught to save!

O landsman, art thou false or true?
What sign hast thou to show?
— The crimson stains from loyal veins
That hold my heart-blood's flow!
— Enough! what more shall honor claim?
I know the sacred sign;
Above thy head our flag shall spread,
Our ocean path be thine!

The bark sails on; the Pilgrim's Cape
Lies low along her lee,
Whose headland crooks its anchor-flukes
To lock the shore and sea.
No treason here! it cost too dear
To win this barren realm!

And true and free the hands must be
That hold the whaler's helm!

Still on! Manhattan's narrowing bay
No rebel cruiser scars;
Her waters feel no pirate's keel
That flaunts the fallen stars!
— But watch the light on yonder height, —
Ay, pilot, have a care!
Some lingering cloud in mist may shroud
The capes of Delaware!

Say, pilot, what this fort may be,
Whose sentinels look down
From moated walls that show the sea
Their deep embrasures' frown?
The Rebel host claims all the coast,
But these are friends, we know,
Whose footprints spoil the "sacred soil,"
And this is? — Fort Monroe!

The breakers roar, — how bears the shore?
— The traitorous wreckers' hands
Have quenched the blaze that poured its rays
Along the Hatteras sands.
— Ha! say not so! I see its glow!
Again the shoals display
The beacon light that shines by night,
The Union Stars by day!

The good ship flies to milder skies,
The wave more gently flows,

The softening breeze wafts o'er the seas
The breath of Beaufort's rose.
What fold is this the sweet winds kiss,
Fair-striped and many-starred,
Whose shadow palls these orphaned walls,
The twins of Beauregard?

What! heard you not Port Royal's doom?
How the black war-ships came
And turned the Beaufort roses' bloom
To redder wreaths of flame?
How from Rebellion's broken reed
We saw his emblem fall,
As soon his cursèd poison-weed
Shall drop from Sumter's wall?

On! on! Pulaski's iron hail
Falls harmless on Tybee!
The good ship feels the freshening gales,
She strikes the open sea;
She rounds the point, she threads the keys
That guard the Land of Flowers,
And rides at last where firm and fast
Her own Gibraltar towers!

The good ship Union's voyage is o'er,
At anchor safe she swings,
And loud and clear with cheer on cheer
Her joyous welcome rings:
Hurrah! Hurrah! it shakes the wave,
It thunders on the shore, —
One flag, one land, one heart, one hand,
One Nation, evermore!

"CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL SERVE"

1863

YES, tyrants, you hate us, and fear while you hate
The self-ruling, chain-breaking, throne-shaking State!
The night-birds dread morning, — your instinct is true, —
The day-star of Freedom brings midnight for you!

Why plead with the deaf for the cause of mankind?
The owl hoots at noon that the eagle is blind!
We ask not your reasons, — 't were wasting our time, —
Our life is a menace, our welfare a crime!

We have battles to fight, we have foes to subdue, —
Time waits not for us, and we wait not for you!
The mower mows on, though the adder may writhe
And the copper-head coil round the blade of his scythe!

"No sides in this quarrel," your statesmen may urge,
Of school-house and wages with slave-pen and scourge! —
No sides in the quarrel! proclaim it as well
To the angels that fight with the legions of hell!

They kneel in God's temple, the North and the South,

With blood on each weapon and prayers in each
mouth.
Whose cry shall be answered? Ye Heavens, at-
tend
The lords of the lash as their voices ascend!

"O Lord, we are shaped in the image of Thee, —
Smite down the base millions that claim to be free,
And lend thy strong arm to the soft-handed race
Who eat *not* their bread in the sweat of their
face!"

So pleads the proud planter. What echoes are
these?
The bay of his bloodhound is borne on the breeze,
And, lost in the shriek of his victim's despair,
His voice dies unheard. — Hear the Puritan's
prayer!

"O Lord, that didst smother mankind in thy flood,
The sun is as sackcloth, the moon is as blood,
The stars fall to earth as untimely are cast
The figs from the fig-tree that shakes in the blast!

"All nations, all tribes in whose nostrils is breath
Stand gazing at Sin as she travails with Death!
Lord, strangle the monster that struggles to birth,
Or mock us no more with thy 'Kingdom on
Earth!'

"If Ammon and Moab must reign in the land
Thou gavest thine Israel, fresh from thy hand,

Call Baäl and Ashtaroth out of their graves
To be the new gods for the empire of slaves!"

Whose God will ye serve, O ye rulers of men?
Will ye build you new shrines in the slave-breeder's den?
Or bow with the children of light, as they call
On the Judge of the Earth and the Father of All?

Choose wisely, choose quickly, for time moves apace, —
Each day is an age in the life of our race!
Lord, lead them in love, ere they hasten in fear
From the fast-rising flood that shall girdle the sphere!

F. W. C.

1864

FAST as the rolling seasons bring
The hour of fate to those we love,
Each pearl that leaves the broken string
Is set in Friendship's crown above.
As narrower grows the earthly chain,
The circle widens in the sky;
These are our treasures that remain,
But those are stars that beam on high.

We miss — oh, how we miss! — *his* face, —
With trembling accents speak his name.
Earth cannot fill his shadowed place
From all her rolls of pride and fame;

Our song has lost the silvery thread
That carolled through his jocund lips;
Our laugh is mute, our smile is fled,
And all our sunshine in eclipse.

And what and whence the wondrous charm
That kept his manhood boylike still, —
That life's hard censors could disarm
And lead them captive at his will?
His heart was shaped of rosier clay, —
His veins were filled with ruddier fire, —
Time could not chill him, fortune sway,
Nor toil with all its burdens tire.

His speech burst throbbing from its fount
And set our colder thoughts aglow,
As the hot leaping geysers mount
And falling melt the Iceland snow.
Some word, perchance, we counted rash, —
Some phrase our calmness might disclaim,
Yet 't was the sunset's lightning's flash,
No angry bolt, but harmless flame.

Man judges all, God knoweth each;
We read the rule, He sees the law;
How oft his laughing children teach
The truths his prophets never saw!
O friend, whose wisdom flowered in mirth,
Our hearts are sad, our eyes are dim;
He gave thy smiles to brighten earth, —
We trust thy joyous soul to Him!

Alas! — our weakness Heaven forgive!
We murmur, even while we trust,
"How long earth's breathing burdens live,
Whose hearts, before they die, are dust! "
But thou! — through grief's untimely tears
We ask with half-reproachful sigh —
"Couldst thou not watch a few brief years
Till Friendship faltered, 'Thou mayst die'?"

Who loved our boyish years so well?
Who knew so well their pleasant tales,
And all those livelier freaks could tell
Whose oft-told story never fails?
In vain we turn our aching eyes, —
In vain we stretch our eager hands, —
Cold in his wintry shroud he lies
Beneath the dreary drifting sands!

Ah, speak not thus! *He* lies not there!
We see him, hear him as of old!
He comes! He claims his wonted chair;
His beaming face we still behold!
His voice rings clear in all our songs,
And loud his mirthful accents rise;
To us our brother's life belongs, —
Dear friends, a classmate never dies!

THE LAST CHARGE

1864

Now, men of the North! will you join in the strife
For country, for freedom, for honor, for life?
The giant grows blind in his fury and spite, —
One blow on his forehead will settle the fight!

Flash full in his eyes the blue lightning of steel,
And stun him with cannon-bolts, peal upon peal!
Mount, troopers, and follow your game to its lair,
As the hound tracks the wolf and the beagle the hare!

Blow, trumpets, your summons, till sluggards awake!
Beat, drums, till the roofs of the faint-hearted shake!
Yet, yet, ere the signet is stamped on the scroll,
Their names may be traced on the blood-sprinkled roll!

Trust not the false herald that painted your shield:
True honor *to-day* must be sought on the field!
Her scutcheon shows white with a blazon of red, —
The life-drops of crimson for liberty shed!

The hour is at hand, and the moment draws nigh;
The dog-star of treason grows dim in the sky;

Shine forth from the battle-cloud, light of the morn,
Call back the bright hour when the Nation was born!

The rivers of peace through our valleys shall run,
As the glaciers of tyranny melt in the sun;
Smite, smite the proud parricide down from his throne, —
His sceptre once broken, the world is our own!

OUR OLDEST FRIEND

1865

I GIVE you the health of the oldest friend
That, short of eternity, earth can lend, —
A friend so faithful and tried and true
That nothing can wean him from me and you.

When first we screeched in the sudden blaze
Of the daylight's blinding and blasting rays,
And gulped at the gaseous, groggy air,
This old, old friend stood waiting there.

And when, with a kind of mortal strife,
We had gasped and choked into breathing life,
He watched by the cradle, day and night,
And held our hands till we stood upright.

From gristle and pulp our frames have grown
To stringy muscle and solid bone;

While we were changing, he altered not;
We might forget, but he never forgot.

He came with us to the college class, —
Little cared he for the steward's pass!
All the rest must pay their fee,
But the grim old dead-head entered free.

He stayed with us while we counted o'er
Four times each of the seasons four;
And with every season, from year to year,
The dear name Classmate he made more dear.

He never leaves us, — he never will,
Till our hands are cold and our hearts are still;
On birthdays, and Christmas, and New-Year's too,
He always remembers both me and you.

Every year this faithful friend
His little present is sure to send;
Every year, wheresoe'er we be,
He wants a keepsake from you and me.

How he loves us! he pats our heads,
And, lo! they are gleaming with silver threads;
And he 's always begging one lock of hair,
Till our shining crowns have nothing to wear.

At length he will tell us, one by one,
"My child, your labor on earth is done;
And now you must journey afar to see
My elder brother, — Eternity!"

And so, when long, long years have passed,
Some dear old fellow will be the last, —
Never a boy alive but he
Of all our goodly company!

When he lies down, but not till then,
Our kind Class-Angel will drop the pen
That writes in the day-book kept above
Our lifelong record of faith and love.

So here 's a health in homely rhyme
To our oldest classmate, Father Time!
May our last survivor live to be
As bald and as wise and as tough as he!

SHERMAN 'S IN SAVANNAH

A HALF-RHYMED IMPROMPTU

1865

LIKE the tribes of Israel,
Fed on quails and manna,
Sherman and his glorious band
Journeyed through the rebel land,
Fed from Heaven's all-bounteous hand,
Marching on Savannah!

As the moving pillar shone,
Streamed the starry banner
All day long in rosy light,
Flaming splendor all the night,

Till it swooped in eagle flight
  Down on doomed Savannah!

  Glory be to God on high!
  Shout the loud Hosanna!
Treason's wilderness is past,
Canaan's shore is won at last,
Peal a nation's trumpet-blast, —
  Sherman 's in Savannah!

  Soon shall Richmond's tough old hide
  Find a tough old tanner!
Soon from every rebel wall
Shall the rag of treason fall,
Till our banner flaps o'er all
  As it crowns Savannah!

MY ANNUAL

1866

How long will this harp which you once loved to hear
Cheat your lips of a smile or your eyes of a tear?
How long stir the echoes it wakened of old,
While its strings were unbroken, untarnished its gold?

Dear friends of my boyhood, my words do you wrong;
The heart, the heart only, shall throb in my song;

It reads the kind answer that looks from your
eyes, —
"We will bid our old harper play on till he dies."

Though Youth, the fair angel that looked o'er the
strings,
Has lost the bright glory that gleamed on his
wings,
Though the freshness of morning has passed from
its tone,
It is still the old harp that was always your own.

I claim not its music, — each note it affords
I strike from your heart-strings, that lend me its
chords;
I know you will listen and love to the last,
For it trembles and thrills with the voice of your
past.

Ah, brothers! dear brothers! the harp that I hold
No craftsman could string and no artisan mould;
He shaped it, He strung it, who fashioned the lyres
That ring with the hymns of the seraphim choirs.

Not mine are the visions of beauty it brings,
Not mine the faint fragrance around it that clings;
Those shapes are the phantoms of years that are
fled,
Those sweets breathe from roses your summers
have shed.

Each hour of the past lends its tribute to this,
Till it blooms like a bower in the Garden of Bliss;

The thorn and the thistle may grow as they will,
Where Friendship unfolds there is Paradise still.

The bird wanders careless while summer is green,
The leaf-hidden cradle that rocked him unseen;
When Autumn's rude fingers the woods have undressed,
The boughs may look bare, but they show him his nest.

Too precious these moments! the lustre they fling
Is the light of our year, is the gem of its ring,
So brimming with sunshine, we almost forget
The rays it has lost, and its border of jet.

While round us the many-hued halo is shed,
How dear are the living, how near are the dead!
One circle, scarce broken, these waiting below,
Those walking the shores where the asphodels blow!

Not life shall enlarge it nor death shall divide, —
No brother new-born finds his place at my side;
No titles shall freeze us, no grandeurs infest,
His Honor, His Worship, are boys like the rest.

Some won the world's homage, their names we hold dear, —
But Friendship, not Fame, is the countersign here;
Make room by the conqueror crowned in the strife
For the comrade that limps from the battle of life!

What tongue talks of battle? Too long we have heard

In sorrow, in anguish, that terrible word;
It reddened the sunshine, it crimsoned the wave,
It sprinkled our doors with the blood of our brave.

Peace, Peace comes at last, with her garland of white;
Peace broods in all hearts as we gather to-night;
The blazon of Union spreads full in the sun;
We echo its words, — We are one! We are one!

ALL HERE

1867

It is not what we say or sing,
That keeps our charm so long unbroken,
Though every lightest leaf we bring
May touch the heart as friendship's token;
Not what we sing or what we say
Can make us dearer to each other;
We love the singer and his lay,
But love as well the silent brother.

Yet bring whate'er your garden grows,
Thrice welcome to our smiles and praises:
Thanks for the myrtle and the rose,
Thanks for the marigolds and daisies;
One flower erelong we all shall claim,
Alas! unloved of Amaryllis —
Nature's last blossom — need I name
The wreath of threescore's silver lilies?

How many, brothers, meet to-night
  Around our boyhood's covered embers?
Go read the treasured names aright
  The old triennial list remembers;
Though twenty wear the starry sign
  That tells a life has broke its tether,
The fifty-eight of 'twenty-nine —
  God bless THE BOYS! — are all together!

These come with joyous look and word,
  With friendly grasp and cheerful greeting, —
Those smile unseen, and move unheard,
  The angel guests of every meeting;
They cast no shadow in the flame
  That flushes from the gilded lustre,
But count us — we are still the same;
  One earthly band, one heavenly cluster!

Love dies not when he bows his head
  To pass beyond the narrow portals, —
The light these glowing moments shed
  Wakes from their sleep our lost immortals;
They come as in their joyous prime,
  Before their morning days were numbered, —
Death stays the envious hand of Time, —
  The eyes have not grown dim that slumbered!

The paths that loving souls have trod
  Arch o'er the dust where worldlings grovel
High as the zenith o'er the sod, —
  The cross above the sexton's shovel!

We rise beyond the realms of day;
They seem to stoop from spheres of glory
With us one happy hour to stray,
While youth comes back in song and story.

Ah! ours is friendship true as steel
That war has tried in edge and temper;
It writes upon its sacred seal
The priest's *ubique — omnes — semper!*
It lends the sky a fairer sun
That cheers our lives with rays as steady
As if our footsteps had begun
To print the golden streets already!

The tangling years have clinched its knot
Too fast for mortal strength to sunder;
The lightning bolts of noon are shot;
No fear of evening's idle thunder!
Too late! too late! — no graceless hand
Shall stretch its cords in vain endeavor
To rive the close encircling band
That made and keeps us one forever!

So when upon the fated scroll
The falling stars have all descended,
And, blotted from the breathing roll,
Our little page of life is ended,
We ask but one memorial line
Traced on thy tablet, Gracious Mother:
"My children. Boys of '29.
In pace. How they loved each other!"

ONCE MORE

1868

"*Will I come?*" That *is* pleasant! I beg to inquire
If the gun that I carry has ever missed fire?
And which was the muster-roll — mention but one —
That missed your old comrade who carries the gun?

You see me as always, my hand on the lock,
The cap on the nipple, the hammer full cock;
It is rusty, some tell me; I heed not the scoff;
It is battered and bruised, but it always goes off!

"Is it loaded?" I 'll bet you! What does n't it hold?
Rammed full to the muzzle with memories untold;
Why, it scares me to fire, lest the pieces should fly
Like the cannons that burst on the Fourth of July!

One charge is a remnant of College-day dreams
(Its wadding is made of forensics and themes);
Ah, visions of fame! what a flash in the pan
As the trigger was pulled by each clever young man!

And love! Bless my stars, what a cartridge is there!
With a wadding of rose-leaves and ribbons and hair, —

All crammed in one verse to go off at a shot!
"Were there ever such sweethearts?" Of course there were not!

And next, — what a load! it will split the old gun, —
Three fingers, — four fingers, — five fingers of fun!
Come tell me, gray sages, for mischief and noise
Was there ever a lot like us fellows, "The Boys"?

Bump! bump! down the staircase the cannon-ball goes, —
Aha, old Professor! Look out for your toes!
Don't think, my poor Tutor, to *sleep* in your bed, —
Two "Boys" — 'twenty-niners — room over your head!

Remember the nights when the tar-barrel blazed!
From red "Massachusetts" the war-cry was raised;
And "Hollis" and "Stoughton" reëchoed the call;
Till P—— poked his head out of Holworthy Hall!

Old P——, as we called him, — at fifty or so, —
Not exactly a bud, but not quite in full blow;
In ripening manhood, suppose we should say,
Just nearing his prime, as we boys are to-day!

Oh say, can you look through the vista of age
To the time when old Morse drove the regular stage?

When Lyon told tales of the long-vanished years,
And Lenox crept round with the rings in his ears?

And dost thou, my brother, remember indeed
The days of our dealings with Willard and Read?
When "Dolly" was kicking and running away,
And punch came up smoking on Fillebrown's tray?

But where are the Tutors, my brother, oh tell! —
And where the Professors, remembered so well?
The sturdy old Grecian of Holworthy Hall,
And Latin, and Logic, and Hebrew, and all?

"They are dead, the old fellows" (we called
them so then,
Though we since have found out they were lusty
young men).
They are *dead*, do you tell me? — but how do you
know?
You 've filled once too often. I doubt if it 's so.

I 'm thinking. I 'm thinking. Is this 'sixty-
eight?
It 's not quite so clear. It admits of debate.
I *may* have been dreaming. I rather incline
To think — yes, I 'm certain — it is 'twenty-nine!

"By Zhorzhe!" — as friend Sales is accustomed to
cry, —
You tell me they 're dead, but I know it 's a lie!
Is Jackson not President? — What was 't you said?
It can't be; you 're joking; what, — all of 'em
dead?

Jim, — Harry, — Fred, — Isaac, — all gone from
our side?
They could n't have left us, — no, not if they tried.
Look, — there 's our old Præses, — he can't find
his text;
See, — P—— rubs his leg, as he growls out
"*The next!*"

I told you 't was nonsense. Joe, give us a song!
Go harness up "Dolly," and fetch her along! —
Dead! Dead! You false graybeard, I swear
they are not!
Hurrah for Old Hickory! — Oh, I forgot!

Well, *one* we have with us (how could he contrive
To deal with us youngsters and still to survive?)
Who wore for our guidance authority's robe, —
No wonder he took to the study of Job!

And now, as my load was uncommonly large,
Let me taper it off with a classical charge;
When that has gone off, I shall drop my old gun —
And then stand at ease, for my service is done.

Bibamus ad Classem vocatam "The Boys"
Et eorum Tutorem cui nomen est "Noyes";
Et floreant, valeant, vigeant tam,
Non Peircius ipse enumeret quam!

THE OLD CRUISER

1869

HERE 's the old cruiser, 'Twenty-nine,
Forty times she 's crossed the line;
Same old masts and sails and crew,
Tight and tough and as good as new.

Into the harbor she bravely steers
Just as she 's done for these forty years, —
Over her anchor goes, splash and clang!
Down her sails drop, rattle and bang!

Comes a vessel out of the dock
Fresh and spry as a fighting-cock,
Feathered with sails and spurred with steam,
Heading out of the classic stream.

Crew of a hundred all aboard,
Every man as fine as a lord.
Gay they look and proud they feel,
Bowling along on even keel.

On they float with wind and tide, —
Gain at last the old ship's side;
Every man looks down in turn, —
Reads the name that 's on her stern.

"Twenty-nine! — *Diable* you say!
That was in Skipper Kirkland's day!
What was the Flying Dutchman's name?
This old rover must be the same.

"Ho! you Boatswain that walks the deck,
How does it happen you 're not a wreck?
One and another have come to grief,
How have you dodged by rock and reef?"

Boatswain, lifting one knowing lid,
Hitches his breeches and shifts his quid:
"Hey? What is it? Who 's come to grief?
Louder, young swab, I 'm a little deaf."

"I say, old fellow, what keeps your boat
With all you jolly old boys afloat,
When scores of vessels as good as she
Have swallowed the salt of the bitter sea?

"Many a crew from many a craft
Goes drifting by on a broken raft
Pieced from a vessel that clove the brine
Taller and prouder than 'Twenty-nine.

"Some capsized in an angry breeze,
Some were lost in the narrow seas,
Some on snags and some on sands
Struck and perished and lost their hands.

"Tell us young ones, you gray old man,
What is your secret, if you can.
We have a ship as good as you,
Show us how to keep our crew."

So in his ear the youngster cries;
Then the gray Boatswain straight replies: —

"All your crew be sure you know, —
Never let one of your shipmates go.

"If he leaves you, change your tack,
Follow him close and fetch him back;
When you 've hauled him in at last,
Grapple his flipper and hold him fast.

"If you 've wronged him, speak him fair,
Say you 're sorry and make it square;
If he 's wronged you, wink so tight
None of you see what 's plain in sight.

"When the world goes hard and wrong,
Lend a hand to help him along;
When his stockings have holes to darn,
Don't you grudge him your ball of yarn.

"Once in a twelvemonth, come what may,
Anchor your ship in a quiet bay,
Call all hands and read the log,
And give 'em a taste of grub and grog.

"Stick to each other through thick and thin;
All the closer as age leaks in;
Squalls will blow and clouds will frown,
But stay by your ship till you all go down!"

ADDED FOR THE ALUMNI MEETING, JUNE 29, 1869.

So the gray Boatswain of 'Twenty-nine
Piped to "The Boys" as they crossed the line;

Round the cabin sat thirty guests,
Babes of the nurse with a thousand breasts.

There were the judges, grave and grand,
Flanked by the priests on either hand;
There was the lord of wealth untold,
And the dear good fellow in broadcloth old.

Thirty men, from twenty towns,
Sires and grandsires with silvered crowns, —
Thirty school-boys all in a row, —
Bens and Georges and Bill and Joe.

In thirty goblets the wine was poured,
But threescore gathered around the board, —
For lo! at the side of every chair
A shadow hovered — we all were there!

HYMN FOR THE CLASS-MEETING

1869

THOU Gracious Power, whose mercy lends
The light of home, the smile of friends,
Our gathered flock thine arms infold
As in the peaceful days of old.

Wilt thou not hear us while we raise,
In sweet accord of solemn praise,
The voices that have mingled long
In joyous flow of mirth and song?

For all the blessings life has brought,
For all its sorrowing hours have taught,
For all we mourn, for all we keep,
The hands we clasp, the loved that sleep;

The noontide sunshine of the past,
These brief, bright moments fading fast,
The stars that gild our darkening years,
The twilight ray from holier spheres;

We thank thee, Father! let thy grace
Our narrowing circle still embrace,
Thy mercy shed its heavenly store,
Thy peace be with us evermore!

EVEN-SONG.

1870

It may be, yes, it must be, Time that brings
An end to mortal things,
That sends the beggar Winter in the train
Of Autumn's burdened wain, —
Time, that is heir of all our earthly state,
And knoweth well to wait
Till sea hath turned to shore and shore to sea,
If so it need must be,
Ere he make good his claim and call his own
Old empires overthrown, —
Time, who can find no heavenly orb too large
To hold its fee in charge,

Nor any motes that fill its beam so small,
  But he shall care for all, —
It may be, must be, — yes, he soon shall tire
  This hand that holds the lyre.

Then ye who listened in that earlier day
  When to my careless lay
I matched its chords and stole their first-born thrill,
  With untaught rudest skill
Vexing a treble from the slender strings
  Thin as the locust sings
When the shrill-crying child of summer's heat
  Pipes from its leafy seat,
The dim pavilion of embowering green
  Beneath whose shadowy screen
The small sopranist tries his single note
  Against the song-bird's throat,
And all the echoes listen, but in vain;
  They hear no answering strain, —
Then ye who listened in that earlier day
  Shall sadly turn away,

Saying, "The fire burns low, the hearth is cold
  That warmed our blood of old;
Cover its embers and its half-burnt brands,
  And let us stretch our hands
Over a brighter and fresh-kindled flame;
  Lo, this is not the same,
The joyous singer of our morning time,
  Flushed high with lusty rhyme!
Speak kindly, for he bears a human heart,
  But whisper him apart, —

Tell him the woods their autumn robes have shed
  And all their birds have fled,
And shouting winds unbuild the naked nests
  They warmed with patient breasts;
Tell him the sky is dark, the summer o'er,
  And bid him sing no more!"

Ah, welladay! if words so cruel-kind
  A listening ear might find!
But who that hears the music in his soul
  Of rhythmic waves that roll
Crested with gleams of fire, and as they flow
  Stir all the deeps below
Till the great pearls no calm might ever reach
  Leap glistening on the beach,—
Who that has known the passion and the pain,
  The rush through heart and brain,
The joy so like a pang his hand is pressed
  Hard on his throbbing breast,
When thou, whose smile is life and bliss and fame
  Hast set his pulse aflame,
Muse of the lyre! can say farewell to thee?
  Alas! and must it be?

In many a clime, in many a stately tongue,
  The mighty bards have sung;
To these the immemorial thrones belong
  And purple robes of song;
Yet the slight minstrel loves the slender tone
  His lips may call his own,
And finds the measure of the verse more sweet,
  Timed by his pulse's beat,

Than all the hymnings of the laurelled throng.
Say not I do him wrong,
For Nature spoils her warblers, — them she feeds
In lotus-growing meads
And pours them subtle draughts from haunted streams
That fill their souls with dreams.

Full well I know the gracious mother's wiles
And dear delusive smiles!
No callow fledgling of her singing brood
But tastes that witching food,
And hearing overhead the eagle's wing,
And how the thrushes sing,
Vents his exiguous chirp, and from his nest
Flaps forth — we know the rest.
I own the weakness of the tuneful kind, —
Are not all harpers blind?
I sang too early, must I sing too late?
The lengthening shadows wait
The first pale stars of twilight, — yet how sweet
The flattering whisper's cheat, —
"Thou hast the fire no evening chill can tame,
Whose coals outlast its flame!"

Farewell, ye carols of the laughing morn,
Of earliest sunshine born!
The sower flings the seed and looks not back
Along his furrowed track;
The reaper leaves the stalks for other hands
To gird with circling bands;

The wind, earth's careless servant, truant-born,
  Blows clean the beaten corn
And quits the thresher's floor, and goes his way
  To sport with ocean's spray;
The headlong-stumbling rivulet scrambling down
  To wash the sea-girt town,
Still babbling of the green and billowy waste
  Whose salt he longs to taste,
Ere his warm wave its chilling clasp may feel
  Has twirled the miller's wheel.

The song has done its task that makes us bold
  With secrets else untold,—
And mine has run its errand; through the dews
  I tracked the flying Muse;
The daughter of the morning touched my lips
  With roseate finger-tips;
Whether I would or would not, I must sing
  With the new choirs of spring;
Now, as I watch the fading autumn day
  And trill my softened lay,
I think of all that listened, and of one
  For whom a brighter sun
Dawned at high summer's noon. Ah, comrades dear,
  Are not all gathered here?
Our hearts have answered. — Yes! they hear our call:
  All gathered here! all! all!

THE SMILING LISTENER

1871

PRECISELY. I see it. You all want to say
That a tear is too sad and a laugh is too gay;
You could stand a faint smile, you could manage a sigh,
But you value your ribs, and you don't want to cry.

And why at our feast of the clasping of hands
Need we turn on the stream of our lachrymal glands?
Though we see the white breakers of age on our bow,
Let us take a good pull in the jolly-boat now!

It 's hard if a fellow cannot feel content
When a banquet like this does n't cost him a cent,
When his goblet and plate he may empty at will,
And our kind Class Committee will settle the bill.

And here 's your old friend, the identical bard
Who has rhymed and recited you verse by the yard
Since the days of the empire of Andrew the First
Till you 're full to the brim and feel ready to burst.

It 's awful to think of, — how year after year
With his piece in his pocket he waits for you here;
No matter who 's missing, there always is one
To lug out his manuscript, sure as a gun.

"Why won't he stop writing?" Humanity cries:
The answer is briefly, "He can't if he tries;
He has played with his foolish old feather so long,
That the goose-quill in spite of him cackles in song."

You have watched him with patience from morning to dusk
Since the tassel was bright o'er the green of the husk,
And now — it 's too bad — it 's a pitiful job —
He has shelled the ripe ear till he 's come to the cob.

I see one face beaming — it listens so well
There must be some music yet left in my shell —
The wine of my soul is not thick on the lees;
One string is unbroken, one friend I can please!

Dear comrade, the sunshine of seasons gone by
Looks out from your tender and tear-moistened eye,
A pharos of love on an ice-girdled coast, —
Kind soul! — Don't you hear me? — He 's deaf as a post!

Can it be one of Nature's benevolent tricks
That you grow hard of hearing as I grow prolix?
And that look of delight which would angels beguile
Is the deaf man's prolonged unintelligent smile?

Ah! the ear may grow dull, and the eye may wax dim,

But they still know a classmate — they can't mistake him;
There is something to tell us, "That 's one of our band,"
Though we groped in the dark for a touch of his hand.

Well, Time with his snuffers is prowling about
And his shaky old fingers will soon snuff us out;
There 's a hint for us all in each pendulum tick,
For we 're low in the tallow and long in the wick.

You remember Rossini — you 've been at the play?
How his overture-endings keep crashing away
Till you think, "It 's all over — it can't but stop now —
That 's the screech and the bang of the final bow-wow."

And you find you 're mistaken; there 's lots more to come,
More banging, more screeching of fiddle and drum,
Till when the last ending is finished and done,
You feel like a horse when the winning-post 's won.

So I, who have sung to you, merry or sad,
Since the days when they called me a promising lad,
Though I 've made you more rhymes than a tutor could scan,
Have a few more still left, like the razor-strop man.

Now pray don't be frightened — I 'm ready to stop
My galloping anapests' clatter and pop —
In fact, if you say so, retire from to-day
To the garret I left, on a poet's half-pay.

And yet — I can't help it — perhaps — who can tell?
You might miss the poor singer you treated so well,
And confess you could stand him five minutes or so,
"It was so like old times we remember, you know."

'T is not that the music can signify much,
But then there are chords that awake with a touch, —
And our hearts can find echoes of sorrow and joy
To the winch of the minstrel who hails from Savoy.

So this hand-organ tune that I cheerfully grind
May bring the old places and faces to mind,
And seen in the light of the past we recall
The flowers that have faded bloom fairest of all!

OUR SWEET SINGER

J. A.

1872

ONE memory trembles on our lips;
It throbs in every breast;
In tear-dimmed eyes, in mirth's eclipse,
The shadow stands confessed.

O silent voice, that cheered so long
  Our manhood's marching day,
Without thy breath of heavenly song,
  How weary seems the way!

Vain every pictured phrase to tell
  Our sorrowing heart's desire,—
The shattered harp, the broken shell,
  The silent unstrung lyre;

For youth was round us while he sang;
  It glowed in every tone;
With bridal chimes the echoes rang,
  And made the past our own.

Oh blissful dream! Our nursery joys
  We know must have an end,
But love and friendship's broken toys
  May God's good angels mend!

The cheering smile, the voice of mirth
  And laughter's gay surprise
That please the children born of earth.
  Why deem that Heaven denies?

Methinks in that refulgent sphere
  That knows not sun or moon,
An earth-born saint might long to hear
  One verse of "Bonny Doon";

Or walking through the streets of gold
  In heaven's unclouded light,

His lips recall the song of old
And hum "The sky is bright."

And can we smile when thou art dead?
Ah, brothers, even so!
The rose of summer will be red,
In spite of winter's snow.

Thou wouldst not leave us all in gloom
Because thy song is still,
Nor blight the banquet-garland's bloom
With grief's untimely chill.

The sighing wintry winds complain, —
The singing bird has flown, —
Hark! heard I not that ringing strain,
That clear celestial tone?

How poor these pallid phrases seem,
How weak this tinkling line,
As warbles through my waking dream
That angel voice of thine!

Thy requiem asks a sweeter lay;
It falters on my tongue;
For all we vainly strive to say,
Thou shouldst thyself have sung!

H. C. M. H. S. J. K. W.

1873

THE dirge is played, the throbbing death-peal rung,
The sad-voiced requiem sung;
On each white urn where memory dwells
The wreath of rustling immortelles
Our loving hands have hung,
And balmiest leaves have strown and tenderest blossoms flung.

The birds that filled the air with songs have flown,
The wintry blasts have blown,
And these for whom the voice of spring
Bade the sweet choirs their carols sing
Sleep in those chambers lone
Where snows untrodden lie, unheard the night-winds moan.

We clasp them all in memory, as the vine
Whose running stems intwine
The marble shaft, and steal around
The lowly stone, the nameless mound;
With sorrowing hearts resign
Our brothers true and tried, and close our broken line.

How fast the lamps of life grow dim and die
Beneath our sunset sky!
Still fading, as along our track

We cast our saddened glances back,
And while we vainly sigh
The shadowy day recedes, the starry night draws nigh.

As when from pier to pier across the tide
With even keel we glide,
The lights we left along the shore
Grow less and less, while more, yet more
New vistas open wide
Of fair illumined streets and casements golden-eyed.

Each closing circle of our sunlit sphere
Seems to bring heaven more near:
Can we not dream that those we love
Are listening in the world above
And smiling as they hear
The voices known so well of friends that still are dear?

Does all that made us human fade away
With this dissolving clay?
Nay, rather deem the blessed isles
Are bright and gay with joyous smiles,
That angels have their play,
And saints that tire of song may claim their holiday.

All else of earth may perish; love alone
Not heaven shall find outgrown!

Are they not here, our spirit guests,
With love still throbbing in their breasts?
Once more let flowers be strown.
Welcome, ye shadowy forms, we count you still our own!

WHAT I HAVE COME FOR

1873

I HAVE come with my verses — I think I may claim
It is not the first time I have tried on the same.
They were puckered in rhyme, they were wrinkled in wit;
But your hearts were so large that they made them a fit.

I have come — not to tease you with more of my rhyme,
But to feel as I did in the blessed old time;
I want to hear him with the Brobdingnag laugh —
We count him at least as three men and a half.

I have come to meet judges so wise and so grand
That I shake in my shoes while they 're shaking my hand;
And the prince among merchants who put back the crown
When they tried to enthrone him the King of the Town.

I have come to see George — Yes, I think there are four,

If they all were like these I could wish there were more.
I have come to see one whom we used to call "Jim,"
I want to see — oh, don't I want to see him?

I have come to grow young — on my word I declare
I have thought I detected a change in my hair!
One hour with "The Boys" will restore it to brown —
And a wrinkle or two I expect to rub down.

Yes, that 's what I 've come for, as all of us come;
When I meet the dear Boys I could wish I were dumb.
You asked me, you know, but it 's spoiling the fun;
I have told what I came for; my ditty is done.

OUR BANKER

1874

OLD TIME, in whose bank we deposit our notes,
Is a miser who always wants guineas for groats;
He keeps all his customers still in arrears
By lending them minutes and charging them years.

The twelvemonth rolls round and we never forget
On the counter before us to pay him our debt.
We reckon the marks he has chalked on the door,
Pay up and shake hands and begin a new score.

How long he will lend us, how much we may owe,
No angel will tell us, no mortal may know.
At fivescore, at fourscore, at threescore and ten,
He may close the account with a stroke of his pen.

This only we know, — amid sorrows and joys
Old Time has been easy and kind with "The Boys."
Though he must have and will have and does have his pay,
We have found him good-natured enough in his way.

He never forgets us, as others will do, —
I am sure he knows me, and I think he knows you,
For I see on your foreheads a mark that he lends
As a sign he remembers to visit his friends.

In the shape of a classmate (a wig on his crown, —
His day-book and ledger laid carefully down)
He has welcomed us yearly, a glass in his hand,
And pledged the good health of our brotherly band.

He 's a thief, we must own, but how many there be
That rob us less gently and fairly than he:
He has stripped the green leaves that were over us all,
But they let in the sunshine as fast as they fall.

Young beauties may ravish the world with a glance
As they languish in song, as they float in the dance, —

They are grandmothers now we remember as girls,
And the comely white cap takes the place of the curls.

But the sighing and moaning and groaning are o'er,
We are pining and moping and sleepless no more,
And the hearts that were thumping like ships on the rocks
Beat as quiet and steady as meeting-house clocks.

The trump of ambition, loud sounding and shrill,
May blow its long blast, but the echoes are still,
The spring-tides are past, but no billow may reach
The spoils they have landed far up on the beach.

We see that Time robs us, we know that he cheats,
But we still find a charm in his pleasant deceits,
While he leaves the remembrance of all that was best,
Love, friendship, and hope, and the promise of rest.

Sweet shadows of twilight! how calm their repose,
While the dewdrops fall soft in the breast of the rose!
How blest to the toiler his hour of release
When the vesper is heard with its whisper of peace!

Then here 's to the wrinkled old miser, our friend;
May he send us his bills to the century's end,

And lend us the moments no sorrow alloys,
Till he squares his account with the last of "The Boys."

FOR CLASS MEETING

1875

It is a pity and a shame — alas! alas! I know it is,
To tread the trodden grapes again, but so it has been, so it is;
The purple vintage long is past, with ripened clusters bursting so
They filled the wine-vats to the brim,—'t is strange you will be thirsting so!

Too well our faithful memory tells what might be rhymed or sung about,
For all have sighed and some have wept since last year's snows were flung about;
The beacon flame that fired the sky, the modest ray that gladdened us,
A little breath has quenched their light, and deepening shades have saddened us.

No more our brother's life is ours for cheering or for grieving us,
One only sadness they bequeathed, the sorrow of their leaving us;
Farewell! Farewell! — I turn the leaf I read my chiming measure in;
Who knows but something still is there a friend may find a pleasure in?

For who can tell by what he likes what other people's fancies are?
How all men think the best of wives their own particular Nancies are?
If what I sing you brings a smile, you will not stop to catechise,
Nor read Bœotia's lumbering line with nicely scanning Attic eyes.

Perhaps the alabaster box that Mary broke so lovingly,
While Judas looked so sternly on, the Master so approvingly,
Was not so fairly wrought as those that Pilate's wife and daughters had,
Or many a dame of Judah's line that drank of Jordan's waters had.

Perhaps the balm that cost so dear, as some remarked officiously,
The precious nard that filled the room with fragrance so deliciously,
So oft recalled in storied page and sung in verse melodious,
The dancing girl had thought too cheap, — that daughter of Herodias.

Where now are all the mighty deeds that Herod boasted loudest of?
Where now the flashing jewelry the tetrarch's wife was proudest of?

Yet still to hear how Mary loved, all tribes of men
are listening,
And still the sinful woman's tears like stars in
heaven are glistening.

'T is not the gift our hands have brought, the love
it is we bring with it, —
The minstrel's lips may shape the song, his heart
in tune must sing with it;
And so we love the simple lays, and wish we might
have more of them,
Our poet brothers sing for us, — there must be half
a score of them.

It may be that of fame and name our voices once
were emulous, —
With deeper thoughts, with tenderer throbs their
softening tones are tremulous;
The dead seem listening as of old, ere friendship
was bereft of them;
The living wear a kinder smile, the remnant that
is left of them.

Though on the once unfurrowed brows the harrow-
teeth of Time may show,
Though all the strain of crippling years the halting
feet of rhyme may show,
We look and hear with melting hearts, for what
we all remember is
The morn of Spring, nor heed how chill the sky of
gray November is.

Thanks to the gracious powers above from all mankind that singled us,
And dropped the pearl of friendship in the cup they kindly mingled us,
And bound us in a wreath of flowers with hoops of steel knit under it; —
Nor time, nor space, nor chance, nor change, nor death himself shall sunder it!

"AD AMICOS"

1876

"Dumque virent genua
Et decet, obducta solvatur fonte senectus."

THE muse of boyhood's fervid hour
Grows tame as skies get chill and hazy;
Where once she sought a passion-flower,
She only hopes to find a daisy.
Well, who the changing world bewails?
Who asks to have it stay unaltered?
Shall grown-up kittens chase their tails?
Shall colts be never shod or haltered?

Are we "The Boys" that used to make
The tables ring with noisy follies?
Whose deep-lunged laughter oft would shake
The ceiling with its thunder-volleys?
Are we the youths with lips unshorn,
At beauty's feet unwrinkled suitors,
Whose memories reach tradition's morn, —
The days of prehistoric tutors?

"The Boys" we knew, — but who are these
Whose heads might serve for Plutarch's sages,
Or Fox's martyrs, if you please,
Or hermits of the dismal ages?
"The Boys" we knew — can these be those?
Their cheeks with morning's blush were painted; —
Where are the Harrys, Jims, and Joes
With whom we once were well acquainted?

If we are they, we 're not the same;
If they are we, why then they 're masking;
Do tell us, neighbor What 's-your-name,
Who are you? — What 's the use of asking?
You once were George, or Bill, or Ben;
There 's you, yourself — there 's you, that other —
I know you now — I knew you then —
You used to be your younger brother!

You both are all our own to-day, —
But ah! I hear a warning whisper;
Yon roseate hour that flits away
Repeats the Roman's sad *paulisper*.
Come back! come back! we 've need of you
To pay you for your word of warning;
We 'll bathe your wings in brighter dew
Than ever wet the lids of morning!

Behold this cup; its mystic wine
No alien's lip has ever tasted;
The blood of friendship's clinging vine,
Still flowing, flowing, yet unwasted:

Old Time forgot his running sand
And laid his hour-glass down to fill it,
And Death himself with gentle hand
Has touched the chalice, not to spill it.

Each bubble rounding at the brim
Is rainbowed with its magic story;
The shining days with age grown dim
Are dressed again in robes of glory;
In all its freshness spring returns
With song of birds and blossoms tender;
Once more the torch of passion burns,
And youth is here in all its splendor!

Hope swings her anchor like a toy,
Love laughs and shows the silver arrow
We knew so well as man and boy, —
The shaft that stings through bone and marrow;
Again our kindling pulses beat,
With tangled curls our fingers dally,
And bygone beauties smile as sweet
As fresh-blown lilies of the valley.

O blessed hour! we may forget
Its wreaths, its rhymes, its songs, its laughter,
But not the loving eyes we met,
Whose light shall gild the dim hereafter.
How every heart to each grows warm!
Is one in sunshine's ray? We share it.
Is one in sorrow's blinding storm?
A look, a word, shall help him bear it.

"The Boys" we were, "The Boys" we 'll be
As long as three, as two, are creeping;
Then here 's to him — ah! which is he? —
Who lives till all the rest are sleeping;
A life with tranquil comfort blest,
The young man's health, the rich man's plenty,
All earth can give that earth has best,
And heaven at fourscore years and twenty.

HOW NOT TO SETTLE IT

1877

I LIKE, at times, to hear the steeples' chimes
With sober thoughts impressively that mingle;
But sometimes, too, I rather like — don't you? —
To hear the music of the sleigh bells' jingle.

I like full well the deep resounding swell
Of mighty symphonies with chords inwoven;
But sometimes, too, a song of Burns — don't you?
After a solemn storm-blast of Beethoven.

Good to the heels the well-worn slipper feels
When the tired player shuffles off the buskin;
A page of Hood may do a fellow good
After a scolding from Carlyle or Ruskin.

Some works I find, — say Watts upon the Mind, —
No matter though at first they seemed amusing,
Not quite the same, but just a little tame
After some five or six times' reperusing.

So, too, at times when melancholy rhymes
  Or solemn speeches sober down a dinner,
I've seen it's true, quite often, — have n't you? —
  The best-fed guests perceptibly grow thinner.

Better some jest (in proper terms expressed)
  Or story (strictly moral) even if musty,
Or song we sung when these old throats were young, —
  Something to keep our souls from getting rusty.

The poorest scrap from memory's ragged lap
  Comes like an heirloom from a dear dead mother —
Hush! there 's a tear that has no business here,
  A half-formed sigh that ere its birth we smother.

We cry, we laugh; ah, life is half and half,
  Now bright and joyous as a song of Herrick's,
Then chill and bare as funeral-minded Blair;
  As fickle as a female in hysterics.

If I could make you cry I would n't try;
  If you have hidden smiles I 'd like to find them,
And that although, as well I ought to know,
  The lips of laughter have a skull behind them.

Yet when I think we may be on the brink
  Of having Freedom's banner to dispose of,
All crimson-hued, because the Nation would
  Insist on cutting its own precious nose off,

I feel indeed as if we rather need
A sermon such as preachers tie a text on.
If Freedom dies because a ballot lies,
She earns her grave; 't is time to call the sexton!

But if a fight can make the matter right,
Here are we, classmates, thirty men of mettle;
We 're strong and tough, we 've lived nigh long enough, —
What if the Nation gave it us to settle?

The tale would read like that illustrious deed
When Curtius took the leap the gap that filled in,
Thus: "Fivescore years, good friends, as it appears,
At last this people split on Hayes and Tilden.

"One half cried, 'See! the choice is S. J. T.!'
And one half swore as stoutly it was t' other;
Both drew the knife to save the Nation's life
By wholesale vivisection of each other.

"Then rose in mass that monumental Class, —
'Hold! hold!' they cried, 'give us, give us the daggers!'
'Content! content!' exclaimed with one consent
The gaunt ex-rebels and the carpet-baggers.

"Fifteen each side, the combatants divide,
So nicely balanced are their predilections;
And first of all a tear-drop each lets fall,
A tribute to their obsolete affections.

"Man facing man, the sanguine strife began,
Jack, Jim and Joe against Tom, Dick and Harry,
Each several pair its own account to square,
Till both were down or one stood solitary.

"And the great fight raged furious all the night
Till every integer was made a fraction;
Reader, wouldst know what history has to show
As net result of the above transaction?

"Whole coat-tails, four; stray fragments, several score;
A heap of spectacles; a deaf man's trumpet;
Six lawyers' briefs; seven pocket-handkerchiefs;
Twelve canes wherewith the owners used to stump it;

"Odd rubber-shoes; old gloves of different hues;
Tax-bills, — unpaid, — and several empty purses;
And, saved from harm by some protecting charm,
A printed page with Smith's immortal verses;

"Trifles that claim no very special name, —
Some useful, others chiefly ornamental;
Pins, buttons, rings, and other trivial things,
With various wrecks, capillary and dental.

"Also, one flag, — 't was nothing but a rag,
And what device it bore it little matters;
Red, white, and blue, but rent all through and through,
'Union forever' torn to shreds and tatters.

"They fought so well not one was left to tell
Which got the largest share of cuts and slashes;
When heroes meet, both sides are bound to beat;
They telescoped like cars in railroad smashes.

"So the great split that baffled human wit
And might have cost the lives of twenty millions,
As all may see that know the rule of three,
Was settled just as well by these civilians.

"As well. Just so. Not worse, not better. No,
Next morning found the Nation still divided;
Since all were slain, the inference is plain
They left the point they fought for undecided."

If not quite true, as I have told it you, —
This tale of mutual extermination,
To minds perplexed with threats of what comes next,
Perhaps may furnish food for contemplation.

To cut men's throats to help them count their votes
Is asinine — nay, worse — ascidian folly;
Blindness like that would scare the mole and bat,
And make the liveliest monkey melancholy.

I say once more, as I have said before,
If voting for our Tildens and our Hayeses
Means only fight, then, Liberty, good night!
Pack up your ballot-box and go to blazes!

Unfurl your blood-red flags, you murderous hags,
You *pétroleuses* of Paris, fierce and foamy;
We 'll sell our stock in Plymouth's blasted rock,
Pull up our stakes and migrate to Dahomey!

THE LAST SURVIVOR

1878

YES! the vacant chairs tell sadly we are going, going fast,
And the thought comes strangely o'er me, who will live to be the last?
When the twentieth century's sunbeams climb the far-off eastern hill,
With his ninety winters burdened, will he greet the morning still?

Will he stand with Harvard's nurslings when they hear their mother's call
And the old and young are gathered in the many alcoved hall?
Will he answer to the summons when they range themselves in line
And the young mustachioed marshal calls out "Class of '29"?

Methinks I see the column as its lengthened ranks appear
In the sunshine of the morrow of the nineteen hundredth year;

Through the yard 't is creeping, winding, by the walls of dusky red, —
What shape is that which totters at the long procession's head?

Who knows this ancient graduate of fourscore years and ten, —
What place he held, what name he bore among the sons of men?
So speeds the curious question; its answer travels slow;
" 'T is the last of sixty classmates of seventy years ago."

His figure shows but dimly, his face I scarce can see, —
There 's something that reminds me, — it looks like — is it he?
He? Who? No voice may whisper what wrinkled brow shall claim
The wreath of stars that circles our last survivor's name.

Will he be some veteran minstrel, left to pipe in feeble rhyme
All the stories and the glories of our gay and golden time?
Or some quiet, voiceless brother in whose lonely, loving breast
Fond memory broods in silence, like a dove upon her nest?

Will it be some old *Emeritus*, who taught so long ago
The boys that heard him lecture have heads as white as snow?
Or a pious, painful preacher, holding forth from year to year
Till his colleague got a colleague whom the young folks flocked to hear?

Will it be a rich old merchant in a square-tied white cravat,
Or select-man of a village in a pre-historic hat?
Will his dwelling be a mansion in a marble-fronted row,
Or a homestead by a hillside where the huckleberries grow?

I can see our one survivor, sitting lonely by himself, —
All his college text-books round him, ranged in order on their shelf;
There are classic "interliners" filled with learning's choicest pith,
Each *cum notis variorum*, *quas recensuit doctus* Smith;

Physics, metaphysics, logic, mathematics — all the lot
Every wisdom-crammed octavo he has mastered and forgot,

With the ghosts of dead professors standing guard
beside them all;
And the room is full of shadows which their let-
tered backs recall.

How the past spreads out in vision with its far
receding train,
Like a long embroidered arras in the chambers of
the brain,
From opening manhood's morning when first we
learned to grieve
To the fond regretful moments of our sorrow-sad-
dened eve!

What early shadows darkened our idle summer's
joy
When death snatched roughly from us that lovely
bright-eyed boy!
The years move swiftly onwards; the deadly shafts
fall fast, —
Till all have dropped around him — lo, there he
stands, — the last!

Their faces flit before him, some rosy-hued and
fair,
Some strong in iron manhood, some worn with toil
and care:
Their smiles no more shall greet him on cheeks
with pleasure flushed!
The friendly hands are folded, the pleasant voices
hushed!

. . . . . .

My picture sets me dreaming; alas! and can it be
Those two familiar faces we never more may see?
In every entering footfall I think them drawing near,
With every door that opens I say, "At last they 're here!"

The willow bends unbroken when angry tempests blow,
The stately oak is levelled and all its strength laid low;
So fell that tower of manhood, undaunted, patient, strong,
White with the gathering snowflakes, who faced the storm so long.

And he, — what subtle phrases their varying light must blend
To paint as each remembers our many-featured friend!
His wit a flash auroral that laughed in every look,
His talk a sunbeam broken on the ripples of a brook,

Or, fed from thousand sources, a fountain's glittering jet,
Or careless handfuls scattered of diamond sparks unset;
Ah, sketch him, paint him, mould him in every shape you will,
He was *himself* — the only — the one unpictured still!

Farewell! our skies are darkened and yet the stars will shine,
We 'll close our ranks together and still fall into line
Till one is left, one only, to mourn for all the rest;
And Heaven bequeath their memories to him who loves us best!

THE ARCHBISHOP AND GIL BLAS

A MODERNIZED VERSION

1879

I DON'T think I feel much older; I 'm aware I 'm rather gray,
But so are many young folks; I meet 'em every day.
I confess I 'm more particular in what I eat and drink,
But one's taste improves with culture; that is all it means, I think.

Can you read as once you used to? Well, the printing is so bad,
No young folks' eyes can read it like the books that once we had.
Are you quite as quick of hearing? Please to say that once again.
Don't I use plain words, your Reverence? Yes, I often use a cane,

But it 's not because I need it, — no, I always
liked a stick;
And as one might lean upon it, 't is as well it
should be thick.
Oh, I 'm smart, I 'm spry, I 'm lively, — I can
walk, yes, that I can,
On the days I feel like walking, just as well as
you, young man!

Don't you get a little sleepy after dinner every day?
Well, I doze a little, sometimes, but that always
was my way.
Don't you cry a little easier than some twenty years ago?
Well, my heart is very tender, but I think 't was
always so.

Don't you find it sometimes happens that you can't recall a name?
Yes, I know such lots of people, — but my memory 's not to blame.
What! You think my memory 's failing! Why, it 's just as bright and clear, —
I remember my great-grandma! She 's been dead
these sixty year!

Is your voice a little trembly? Well, it may be,
now and then,
But I write as well as ever with a good old-fashioned pen;

It 's the Gillotts make the trouble, — not at all my
finger-ends, —
That is why my hand looks shaky when I sign for
dividends.

Don't you stoop a little, walking? It 's a way
I 've always had,
I have always been round-shouldered, ever since I
was a lad.
Don't you hate to tie your shoe-strings? Yes, I
own it — that is true.
Don't you tell old stories over? I am not aware
I do.

*Don't you stay at home of evenings? Don't you
love a cushioned seat*
*In a corner, by the fireside, with your slippers on
your feet?*
*Don't you wear warm fleecy flannels? Don't you
muffle up your throat?*
*Don't you like to have one help you when you 're
putting on your coat?*

*Don't you like old books you 've dogs-eared, you
can't remember when?*
*Don't you call it late at nine o'clock and go to
bed at ten?*
*How many cronies can you count of all you used
to know*
*Who called you by your Christian name some fifty
years ago?*

How look the prizes to you that used to fire your brain?
You 've reared your mound — how high is it above the level plain?
You 've drained the brimming golden cup that made your fancy reel,
You 've slept the giddy potion off, — now tell us how you feel!

You 've watched the harvest ripening till every stem was cropped,
You 've seen the rose of beauty fade till every petal dropped,
You 've told your thought, you 've done your task, you 've tracked your dial round,
— I backing down! Thank Heaven, not yet! I 'm hale and brisk and sound,

And good for many a tussle, as you shall live to see;
My shoes are not quite ready yet, — don't think you 're rid of me!
Old Parr was in his lusty prime when he was older far,
And where will you be if I live to beat old Thomas Parr?

Ah well, — I know, — at every age life has a certain charm, —
You 're going? Come, permit me, please, I beg you 'll take my arm.

I take your arm! Why take your arm? I 'd
thank you to be told
I 'm old enough to walk alone, but not so *very* old!

THE SHADOWS

1880

"How many have gone?" was the question of old
Ere Time our bright ring of its jewels bereft;
Alas! for too often the death-bell has tolled,
And the question we ask is, "How many are
left?"

Bright sparkled the wine; there were *fifty* that
quaffed;
For a decade had slipped and had taken but
three.
How they frolicked and sung, how they shouted
and laughed,
Like a school full of boys from their benches set
free!

There were speeches and toasts, there were stories
and rhymes,
The hall shook its sides with their merriment's
noise;
As they talked and lived over the college-day
times, —
No wonder they kept their old name of "The
Boys"!

The seasons moved on in their rhythmical flow
With mornings like maidens that pouted or smiled,
With the bud and the leaf and the fruit and the snow,
And the year-books of Time in his alcoves were piled.

There were *forty* that gathered where fifty had met;
Some locks had got silvered, some lives had grown sere,
But the laugh of the laughers was lusty as yet,
And the song of the singers rose ringing and clear.

Still flitted the years; there were *thirty* that came;
"The Boys" they were still, and they answered their call;
There were foreheads of care, but the smiles were the same,
And the chorus rang loud through the garlanded hall.

The hour-hand moved on, and they gathered again;
There were *twenty* that joined in the hymn that was sung;
But ah! for our song-bird we listened in vain, —
The crystalline tones like a seraph's that rung!

How narrow the circle that holds us to-night!
How many the loved ones that greet us no more,

As we meet like the stragglers that come from the fight,
Like the mariners flung from a wreck on the shore!

We look through the twilight for those we have lost;
The stream rolls between us, and yet they seem near;
Already outnumbered by those who have crossed,
Our band is transplanted, its home is not here!

They smile on us still — is it only a dream? —
While fondly or proudly their names we recall;
They beckon — they come — they are crossing the stream —
Lo! the Shadows! the Shadows! room — room for them all!

BENJAMIN PEIRCE

ASTRONOMER, MATHEMATICIAN. 1809–1880

1881

For him the Architect of all
Unroofed our planet's starlit hall;
Through voids unknown to worlds unseen
His clearer vision rose serene.

With us on earth he walked by day,
His midnight path how far away!

We knew him not so well who knew
The patient eyes his soul looked through;

For who his untrod realm could share
Of us that breathe this mortal air,
Or camp in that celestial tent
Whose fringes gild our firmament?

How vast the workroom where he brought
The viewless implements of thought!
The wit how subtle, how profound,
That Nature's tangled webs unwound;

That through the clouded matrix saw
The crystal planes of shaping law,
Through these the sovereign skill that planned, —
The Father's care, the Master's hand!

To him the wandering stars revealed
The secrets in their cradle sealed:
The far-off, frozen sphere that swings
Through ether, zoned with lucid rings;

The orb that rolls in dim eclipse
Wide wheeling round its long ellipse, —
His name Urania writes with these
And stamps it on her Pleiades.

We knew him not? Ah, well we knew
The manly soul, so brave, so true,
The cheerful heart that conquered age,
The childlike silver-bearded sage.

No more his tireless thought explores
The azure sea with golden shores;
Rest, wearied frame! the stars shall keep
A loving watch where thou shalt sleep.

Farewell! the spirit needs must rise,
So long a tenant of the skies, —
Rise to that home all worlds above
Whose sun is God, whose light is love.

IN THE TWILIGHT

1882

NOT bed-time yet! The night-winds blow,
The stars are out, — full well we know
The nurse is on the stair,
With hand of ice and cheek of snow,
And frozen lips that whisper low,
"Come, children, it is time to go
My peaceful couch to share."

No years a wakeful heart can tire;
Not bed-time yet! Come, stir the fire
And warm your dear old hands;
Kind Mother Earth we love so well
Has pleasant stories yet to tell
Before we hear the curfew bell;
Still glow the burning brands.

Not bed-time yet! We long to know
What wonders time has yet to show,
What unborn years shall bring;

What ship the Arctic pole shall reach,
What lessons Science waits to teach,
What sermons there are left to preach.
What poems yet to sing.

What next? we ask; and is it true
The sunshine falls on nothing new,
As Israel's king declared?
Was ocean ploughed with harnessed fire?
Were nations coupled with a wire?
Did Tarshish telegraph to Tyre?
How Hiram would have stared!

And what if Sheba's curious queen,
Who came to see, — and to be seen,—
Or something new to seek,
And swooned, as ladies sometimes do,
At sights that thrilled her through and through,
Had heard, as she was "coming to,"
A locomotive's shriek,

And seen a rushing railway train
As she looked out along the plain
From David's lofty tower,—
A mile of smoke that blots the sky
And blinds the eagles as they fly
Behind the cars that thunder by
A score of leagues an hour!

See to my *fiat lux* respond
This little slumbering fire-tipped wand, —
One touch, — it bursts in flame!

Steal me a portrait from the sun, —
One look, — and lo! the picture done!
Are these old tricks, King Solomon,
We lying moderns claim?

Could you have spectroscoped a star?
If both those mothers at your bar,
The cruel and the mild,
The young and tender, old and tough,
Had said, "Divide, — you 're right, though rough," —
Did old Judea know enough
To etherize the child?

These births of time our eyes have seen,
With but a few brief years between;
What wonder if the text,
For other ages doubtless true,
For coming years will never do, —
Whereof we all should like a few,
If but to see what next.

If such things have been, such may be;
Who would not like to live and see —
If Heaven may so ordain —
What waifs undreamed of, yet in store,
The waves that roll forevermore
On life's long beach may cast ashore
From out the mist-clad main?

Will Earth to pagan dreams return
To find from misery's painted urn
That all save hope has flown, —

Of Book and Church and Priest bereft,
The Rock of Ages vainly cleft,
Life's compass gone, its anchor left,
Left, — lost, — in depths unknown?

Shall Faith the trodden path pursue
The *crux ansata* wearers knew
Who sleep with folded hands,
Where, like a naked, lidless eye,
The staring Nile rolls wandering by
Those mountain slopes that climb the sky
Above the drifting sands?

Or shall a nobler Faith return,
Its fanes a purer gospel learn,
With holier anthems ring,
And teach us that our transient creeds
Were but the perishable seeds
Of harvests sown for larger needs,
That ripening years shall bring?

Well, let the present do its best,
We trust our Maker for the rest,
As on our way we plod;
Our souls, full dressed in fleshly suits,
Love air and sunshine, flowers and fruits,
The daisies better than their roots
Beneath the grassy sod.

Not bed-time yet! The full-blown flower
Of all the year — this evening hour —
With friendship's flame is bright;

Life still is sweet, the heavens are fair,
Though fields are brown and woods are bare,
And many a joy is left to share
  Before we say Good-night!

And when, our cheerful evening past,
The nurse, long waiting, comes at last,
  Ere on her lap we lie
In wearied nature's sweet repose,
At peace with all her waking foes,
Our lips shall murmur, ere they close,
  Good-night! and not Good-by!

A LOVING-CUP SONG

1883

Come, heap the fagots! Ere we go
Again the cheerful hearth shall glow;
  We 'll have another blaze, my boys!
When clouds are black and snows are white,
Then Christmas logs lend ruddy light
  They stole from summer days, my boys,
    They stole from summer days.

And let the Loving-Cup go round,
The Cup with blessed memories crowned,
  That flows whene'er we meet, my boys;
No draught will hold a drop of sin
If love is only well stirred in
  To keep it sound and sweet, my boys,
    To keep it sound and sweet.

Give me, to pin upon my breast,
The blossoms twain I love the best,
A rosebud and a pink, my boys;
Their leaves shall nestle next my heart,
Their perfumed breath shall own its part
In every health we drink, my boys,
In every health we drink.

The breathing blossoms stir my blood,
Methinks I see the lilacs bud
And hear the bluebirds sing, my boys;
Why not? Yon lusty oak has seen
Full tenscore years, yet leaflets green
Peep out with every spring, my boys,
Peep out with every spring.

Old Time his rusty scythe may whet,
The unmowed grass is glowing yet
Beneath the sheltering snow, my boys;
And if the crazy dotard ask,
Is love worn out? Is life a task?
We 'll bravely answer No! my boys,
We 'll bravely answer No!

For life's bright taper is the same
Love tipped of old with rosy flame
That heaven's own altar lent, my boys,
To glow in every cup we fill
Till lips are mute and hearts are still,
Till life and love are spent, my boys,
Till life and love are spent.

THE GIRDLE OF FRIENDSHIP

1884

SHE gathered at her slender waist
The beauteous robe she wore;
Its folds a golden belt embraced,
One rose-hued gem it bore.

The girdle shrank; its lessening round
Still kept the shining gem,
But now her flowing locks it bound,
A lustrous diadem.

And narrower still the circlet grew;
Behold! a glittering band,
Its roseate diamond set anew,
Her neck's white column spanned.

Suns rise and set; the straining clasp
The shortened links resist,
Yet flashes in a bracelet's grasp
The diamond, on her wrist.

At length, the round of changes past
The thieving years could bring,
The jewel, glittering to the last,
Still sparkles in a ring.

So, link by link, our friendships part,
So loosen, break, and fall,
A narrowing zone; the loving heart
Lives changeless through them all

THE LYRE OF ANACREON

1885

THE minstrel of the classic lay
  Of love and wine who sings
Still found the fingers run astray
  That touched the rebel strings.

Of Cadmus he would fain have sung,
  Of Atreus and his line;
But all the jocund echoes rung
  With songs of love and wine.

Ah, brothers! I would fain have caught
  Some fresher fancy's gleam;
My truant accents find, unsought,
  The old familiar theme.

Love, Love! but not the sportive child
  With shaft and twanging bow,
Whose random arrows drove us wild
  Some threescore years ago;

Not Eros, with his joyous laugh,
  The urchin blind and bare,
But Love, with spectacles and staff,
  And scanty, silvered hair.

Our heads with frosted locks are white,
  Our roofs are thatched with snow,
But red, in chilling winter's spite,
  Our hearts and hearthstones glow.

Our old acquaintance, Time, drops in,
And while the running sands
Their golden thread unheeded spin,
He warms his frozen hands.

Stay, wingèd hours, too swift, too sweet,
And waft this message o'er
To all we miss, from all we meet
On life's fast-crumbling shore:

Say that, to old affection true,
We hug the narrowing chain
That binds our hearts, — alas, how few
The links that yet remain!

The fatal touch awaits them all
That turns the rocks to dust;
From year to year they break and fall, —
They break, but never rust.

Say if one note of happier strain
This worn-out harp afford, —
One throb that trembles, not in vain, —
Their memory lent its chord.

Say that when Fancy closed her wings
And Passion quenched his fire,
Love, Love, still echoed from the strings
As from Anacreon's lyre!

THE OLD TUNE

THIRTY-SIXTH VARIATION

1886

THIS shred of song you bid me bring
  Is snatched from fancy's embers;
Ah, when the lips forget to sing,
  The faithful heart remembers!

Too swift the wings of envious Time
  To wait for dallying phrases,
Or woven strands of labored rhyme
  To thread their cunning mazes.

A word, a sigh, and lo, how plain
  Its magic breath discloses
Our life's long vista through a lane
  Of threescore summers' roses!

One language years alone can teach:
  Its roots are young affections
That feel their way to simplest speech
  Through silent recollections.

That tongue is ours. How few the words
  We need to know a brother!
As simple are the notes of birds,
  Yet well they know each other.

This freezing month of ice and snow
  That brings our lives together

Lends to our year a living glow
That warms its wintry weather.

So let us meet as eve draws nigh,
And life matures and mellows,
Till Nature whispers with a sigh,
"Good-night, my dear old fellows!"

THE BROKEN CIRCLE

1887

I STOOD on Sarum's treeless plain,
The waste that careless Nature owns;
Lone tenants of her bleak domain,
Loomed huge and gray the Druid stones.

Upheaved in many a billowy mound
The sea-like, naked turf arose,
Where wandering flocks went nibbling round
The mingled graves of friends and foes.

The Briton, Roman, Saxon, Dane,
This windy desert roamed in turn;
Unmoved these mighty blocks remain
Whose story none that lives may learn.

Erect, half buried, slant or prone,
These awful listeners, blind and dumb,
Hear the strange tongues of tribes unknown,
As wave on wave they go and come.

"Who are you, giants, whence and why?"
I stand and ask in blank amaze;
My soul accepts their mute reply:
"A mystery, as are you that gaze.

"A silent Orpheus wrought the charm
From riven rocks their spoils to bring;
A nameless Titan lent his arm
To range us in our magic ring.

"But Time with still and stealthy stride,
That climbs and treads and levels all,
That bids the loosening keystone slide,
And topples down the crumbling wall, —

"Time, that unbuilds the quarried past,
Leans on these wrecks that press the sod;
They slant, they stoop, they fall at last,
And strew the turf their priests have trod.

"No more our altar's wreath of smoke
Floats up with morning's fragrant dew;
The fires are dead, the ring is broke,
Where stood the many stand the few."

My thoughts had wandered far away,
Borne off on Memory's outspread wing,
To where in deepening twilight lay
The wrecks of friendship's broken ring.

Ah me! of all our goodly train
How few will find our banquet hall!

Yet why with coward lips complain
That this must lean, and that must fall?

Cold is the Druid's altar-stone,
Its vanished flame no more returns;
But ours no chilling damp has known, —
Unchanged, unchanging, still it burns.

So let our broken circle stand
A wreck, a remnant, yet the same,
While one last, loving, faithful hand
Still lives to feed its altar-flame!

THE ANGEL-THIEF

1888

TIME is a thief who leaves his tools behind him;
He comes by night, he vanishes at dawn;
We track his footsteps, but we never find him:
Strong locks are broken, massive bolts are drawn,

And all around are left the bars and borers,
The splitting wedges and the prying keys,
Such aids as serve the soft-shod vault-explorers
To crack, wrench open, rifle as they please.

Ah, these are tools which Heaven in mercy lends us!
When gathering rust has clenched our shackles fast,
Time is the angel-thief that Nature sends us
To break the cramping fetters of our past.

Mourn as we may for treasures he has taken,
  Poor as we feel of hoarded wealth bereft,
More precious are those implements forsaken,
  Found in the wreck his ruthless hands have left.

Some lever that a casket's hinge has broken
  Pries off a bolt, and lo! our souls are free;
Each year some Open Sesame is spoken,
  And every decade drops its master-key.

So as from year to year we count our treasure,
  Our loss seems less, and larger look our gains;
Time's wrongs repaid in more than even measure, —
  We lose our jewels, but we break our chains.

AFTER THE CURFEW

1889

THE Play is over. While the light
  Yet lingers in the darkening hall,
I come to say a last Good-night
  Before the final *Exeunt all.*

We gathered once, a joyous throng:
  The jovial toasts went gayly round;
With jest, and laugh, and shout, and song,
  We made the floors and walls resound.

We come with feeble steps and slow,
  A little band of four or five,

Left from the wrecks of long ago,
  Still pleased to find ourselves alive.

Alive! How living, too, are they
  Whose memories it is ours to share!
Spread the long table's full array, —
  There sits a ghost in every chair!

One breathing form no more, alas!
  Amid our slender group we see;
With him we still remained "The Class," —
  Without his presence what are we?

The hand we ever loved to clasp, —
  That tireless hand which knew no rest, —
Loosed from affection's clinging grasp,
  Lies nerveless on the peaceful breast.

The beaming eye, the cheering voice,
  That lent to life a generous glow,
Whose every meaning said "Rejoice,"
  We see, we hear, no more below.

The air seems darkened by his loss,
  Earth's shadowed features look less fair,
And heavier weighs the daily cross
  His willing shoulders helped us bear.

Why mourn that we, the favored few
  Whom grasping Time so long has spared
Life's sweet illusions to pursue,
  The common lot of age have shared?

In every pulse of Friendship's heart
  There breeds unfelt a throb of pain, —
One hour must rend its links apart,
  Though years on years have forged the chain.

So ends "The Boys," — a lifelong play.
  We too must hear the Prompter's call
To fairer scenes and brighter day:
  Farewell! I let the curtain fall.

POEMS FROM THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE

1857–1858

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

THIS is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main, —
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed, —
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,

Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old
no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice
that sings: —

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting
sea!

SUN AND SHADOW

As I look from the isle, o'er its billows of green,
To the billows of foam-crested blue,
Yon bark, that afar in the distance is seen,
Half dreaming, my eyes will pursue:
Now dark in the shadow, she scatters the spray
As the chaff in the stroke of the flail;
Now white as the sea-gull, she flies on her way,
The sun gleaming bright on her sail.

Yet her pilot is thinking of dangers to shun, —
Of breakers that whiten and roar;
How little he cares, if in shadow or sun
They see him who gaze from the shore!
He looks to the beacon that looms from the reef,
To the rock that is under his lee,
As he drifts on the blast, like a wind-wafted leaf,
O'er the gulfs of the desolate sea.

Thus drifting afar to the dim-vaulted caves
Where life and its ventures are laid,
The dreamers who gaze while we battle the waves
May see us in sunshine or shade;
Yet true to our course, though the shadows grow dark,
We 'll trim our broad sail as before,
And stand by the rudder that governs the bark,
Nor ask how we look from the shore!

MUSA

O MY lost beauty! — hast thou folded quite
Thy wings of morning light
Beyond those iron gates
Where Life crowds hurrying to the haggard Fates,
And Age upon his mound of ashes waits
To chill our fiery dreams,
Hot from the heart of youth plunged in his icy streams?

Leave me not fading in these weeds of care,
  Whose flowers are silvered hair!
  Have I not loved thee long,
Though my young lips have often done thee wrong,
And vexed thy heaven-tuned ear with careless song?
  Ah, wilt thou yet return,
Bearing thy rose-hued torch, and bid thine altar
    burn?

Come to me! — I will flood thy silent shrine
  With my soul's sacred wine,
  And heap thy marble floors
As the wild spice-trees waste their fragrant stores,
In leafy islands walled with madrepores
  And lapped in Orient seas,
When all their feathery palms toss, plume-like, in
    the breeze.

Come to me! — thou shalt feed on honeyed words,
  Sweeter than song of birds; —
  No wailing bulbul's throat,
No melting dulcimer's melodious note
When o'er the midnight wave its murmurs float,
  Thy ravished sense might soothe
With flow so liquid-soft, with strain so velvet-
    smooth.

Thou shalt be decked with jewels, like a queen,
  Sought in those bowers of green
  Where loop the clustered vines
And the close-clinging dulcamara twines, —

Pure pearls of Maydew where the moonlight shines,
And Summer's fruited gems,
And coral pendants shorn from Autumn's berried stems.

Sit by me drifting on the sleepy waves, —
Or stretched by grass-grown graves,
Whose gray, high-shouldered stones,
Carved with old names Life's time-worn roll disowns,
Lean, lichen-spotted, o'er the crumbled bones
Still slumbering where they lay
While the sad Pilgrim watched to scare the wolf away.

Spread o'er my couch thy visionary wing!
Still let me dream and sing, —
Dream of that winding shore
Where scarlet cardinals bloom — for me no more, —
The stream with heaven beneath its liquid floor,
And clustering nenuphars
Sprinkling its mirrored blue like golden-chaliced stars!

Come while their balms the linden-blossoms shed! —
Come while the rose is red, —
While blue-eyed Summer smiles
On the green ripples round yon sunken piles

Washed by the moon-wave warm from Indian isles,
And on the sultry air
The chestnuts spread their palms like holy men in prayer!

Oh for thy burning lips to fire my brain
With thrills of wild, sweet pain! —
On life's autumnal blast,
Like shrivelled leaves, youth's passion-flowers are cast,—
Once loving thee, we love thee to the last! —
Behold thy new-decked shrine,
And hear once more the voice that breathed "Forever thine!"

A PARTING HEALTH

TO J. L. MOTLEY

YES, we knew we must lose him, — though friendship may claim
To blend her green leaves with the laurels of fame;
Though fondly, at parting, we call him our own,
'T is the whisper of love when the bugle has blown.

As the rider that rests with the spur on his heel,
As the guardsman that sleeps in his corselet of steel,
As the archer that stands with his shaft on the string,
He stoops from his toil to the garland we bring.

What pictures yet slumber unborn in his loom,
Till their warriors shall breathe and their beauties shall bloom,
While the tapestry lengthens the life-glowing dyes
That caught from our sunsets the stain of their skies!

In the alcoves of death, in the charnels of time,
Where flit the gaunt spectres of passion and crime,
There are triumphs untold, there are martyrs unsung,
There are heroes yet silent to speak with his tongue!

Let us hear the proud story which time has bequeathed!
From lips that are warm with the freedom they breathed!
Let him summon its tyrants, and tell us their doom,
Though he sweep the black past like Van Tromp with his broom!

. . . . . .

The dream flashes by, for the west-winds awake
On pampas, on prairie, o'er mountain and lake,
To bathe the swift bark, like a sea-girdled shrine,
With incense they stole from the rose and the pine.

So fill a bright cup with the sunlight that gushed
When the dead summer's jewels were trampled and crushed:
THE TRUE KNIGHT OF LEARNING, — the world holds him dear, —
Love bless him, Joy crown him, God speed his career!

1857.

WHAT WE ALL THINK

THAT age was older once than now,
  In spite of locks untimely shed,
Or silvered on the youthful brow;
  That babes make love and children wed.

That sunshine had a heavenly glow,
  Which faded with those "good old days"
When winters came with deeper snow,
  And autumns with a softer haze.

That — mother, sister, wife, or child —
  The "best of women" each has known.
Were school-boys ever half so wild?
  How young the grandpapas have grown!

That *but for this* our souls were free,
  And *but for that* our lives were blest;
That in some season yet to be
  Our cares will leave us time to rest.

Whene'er we groan with ache or pain, —
  Some common ailment of the race, —
Though doctors think the matter plain, —
  That ours is "a peculiar case."

That when like babes with fingers burned
  We count one bitter maxim more,
Our lesson all the world has learned,
  And men are wiser than before.

That when we sob o'er fancied woes,
  The angels hovering overhead
Count every pitying drop that flows,
  And love us for the tears we shed.

That when we stand with tearless eye
  And turn the beggar from our door,
They still approve us when we sigh,
  "Ah, had I but *one thousand more!*"

Though temples crowd the crumbled brink
  O'erhanging truth's eternal flow,
Their tablets bold with *what we think*,
  Their echoes dumb to *what we know;*

That one unquestioned text we read,
  All doubt beyond, all fear above,
Nor crackling pile nor cursing creed
  Can burn or blot it: GOD IS LOVE!

SPRING HAS COME

INTRA MUROS

THE sunbeams, lost for half a year,
  Slant through my pane their morning rays;
For dry northwesters cold and clear,
  The east blows in its thin blue haze.

And first the snowdrop's bells are seen,
  Then close against the sheltering wall

The tulip's horn of dusky green,
  The peony's dark unfolding ball.

The golden-chaliced crocus burns;
  The long narcissus-blades appear;
The cone-beaked hyacinth returns
  To light her blue-flamed chandelier.

The willow's whistling lashes, wrung
  By the wild winds of gusty March,
With sallow leaflets lightly strung,
  Are swaying by the tufted larch.

The elms have robed their slender spray
  With full-blown flower and embryo leaf;
Wide o'er the clasping arch of day
  Soars like a cloud their hoary chief.

See the proud tulip's flaunting cup,
  That flames in glory for an hour, —
Behold it withering, — then look up, —
  How meek the forest monarch's flower!

When wake the violets, Winter dies;
  When sprout the elm-buds, Spring is near;
When lilacs blossom, Summer cries,
  "Bud, little roses! Spring is here!"

The windows blush with fresh bouquets,
  Cut with the May-dew on their lips;
The radish all its bloom displays,
  Pink as Aurora's finger-tips.

Nor less the flood of light that showers
On beauty's changed corolla-shades, —
The walks are gay as bridal bowers
With rows of many-petalled maids.

The scarlet shell-fish click and clash
In the blue barrow where they slide;
The horseman, proud of streak and splash,
Creeps homeward from his morning ride.

Here comes the dealer's awkward string,
With neck in rope and tail in knot, —
Rough colts, with careless country-swing,
In lazy walk or slouching trot.

Wild filly from the mountain-side,
Doomed to the close and chafing thills,
Lend me thy long, untiring stride
To seek with thee thy western hills!

I hear the whispering voice of Spring,
The thrush's trill, the robin's cry,
Like some poor bird with prisoned wing
That sits and sings, but longs to fly.

Oh for one spot of living green, —
One little spot where leaves can grow, —
To love unblamed, to walk unseen,
To dream above, to sleep below!

PROLOGUE

A PROLOGUE? Well, of course the ladies know, —
I have my doubts. No matter, — here we go!
What is a Prologue? Let our Tutor teach:
Pro means beforehand; *logos* stands for speech.
'T is like the harper's prelude on the strings,
The prima donna's courtesy ere she sings;
Prologues in metre are to other *pros*
As worsted stockings are to engine-hose.
"The world 's a stage," — as Shakespeare said, one day;
The stage a world — was what he meant to say.
The outside world 's a blunder, that is clear;
The real world that Nature meant is here.
Here every foundling finds its lost mamma;
Each rogue, repentant, melts his stern papa;
Misers relent, the spendthrift's debts are paid,
The cheats are taken in the traps they laid;
One after one the troubles all are past
Till the fifth act comes right side up at last,
When the young couple, old folks, rogues, and all,
Join hands, *so* happy at the curtain's fall.
Here suffering virtue ever finds relief,
And black-browed ruffians always come to grief.
When the lorn damsel, with a frantic screech,
And cheeks as hueless as a brandy-peach,
Cries, "Help, kyind Heaven!" and drops upon her knees
On the green — baize, — beneath the (canvas) trees, —

See to her side avenging Valor fly: —
"Ha! Villain! Draw! Now, Terraitorr, yield or die!"
When the poor hero flounders in despair,
Some dear lost uncle turns up millionaire,
Clasps the young scapegrace with paternal joy,
Sobs on his neck, "*My boy!* MY BOY!! MY BOY!!!"

Ours, then, sweet friends, the real world to-night,
Of love that conquers in disaster's spite.
Ladies, attend! While woful cares and doubt
Wrong the soft passion in the world without,
Though fortune scowl, though prudence interfere,
One thing is certain: Love will triumph here!
Lords of creation, whom your ladies rule, —
The world's great masters, when you 're out of school, —
Learn the brief moral of our evening's play:
Man has his will, — but woman has her way!
While man's dull spirit toils in smoke and fire,
Woman's swift instinct threads the electric wire, —
The magic bracelet stretched beneath the waves
Beats the black giant with his score of slaves.
All earthly powers confess your sovereign art
But that one rebel, — woman's wilful heart.
All foes you master, but a woman's wit
Lets daylight through you ere you know you 're hit.
So, just to picture what her art can do,
Hear an old story, made as good as new.

Rudolph, professor of the headsman's trade,
Alike was famous for his arm and blade.
One day a prisoner Justice had to kill
Knelt at the block to test the artist's skill.
Bare-armed, swart-visaged, gaunt, and shaggy-browed,
Rudolph the headsman rose above the crowd.
His falchion lighted with a sudden gleam,
As the pike's armor flashes in the stream.
He sheathed his blade; he turned as if to go;
The victim knelt, still waiting for the blow.
"Why strikest not? Perform thy murderous act,"
The prisoner said. (His voice was slightly cracked.)
"Friend, I *have* struck," the artist straight replied;
"Wait but one moment, and yourself decide."
He held his snuff-box, — "Now then, if you please!"
The prisoner sniffed, and, with a crashing sneeze,
Off his head tumbled, — bowled along the floor, —
Bounced down the steps; — the prisoner said no more!
Woman! thy falchion is a glittering eye;
If death lurk in it, oh how sweet to die!
Thou takest hearts as Rudolph took the head;
We die with love, and never dream we 're dead!

LATTER-DAY WARNINGS

WHEN legislators keep the law,
  When banks dispense with bolts and locks,
When berries — whortle, rasp, and straw —
  Grow bigger *downwards* through the box, —

When he that selleth house or land
  Shows leak in roof or flaw in right, —
When haberdashers choose the stand
  Whose window hath the broadest light, —

When preachers tell us all they think,
  And party leaders all they mean, —
When what we pay for, that we drink,
  From real grape and coffee-bean, —

When lawyers take what they would give,
  And doctors give what they would take, —
When city fathers eat to live,
  Save when they fast for conscience' sake, —

When one that hath a horse on sale
  Shall bring his merit to the proof,
Without a lie for every nail
  That holds the iron on the hoof, —

When in the usual place for rips
  Our gloves are stitched with special care,
And guarded well the whalebone tips
  Where first umbrellas need repair, —

When Cuba's weeds have quite forgot
The power of suction to resist,
And claret-bottles harbor not
Such dimples as would hold your fist, —

When publishers no longer steal,
And pay for what they stole before, —
When the first locomotive's wheel
Rolls through the Hoosac Tunnel's bore; —

Till then let Cumming blaze away,
And Miller's saints blow up the globe;
But when you see that blessed day,
Then order your ascension robe!

ALBUM VERSES

WHEN Eve had led her lord away,
And Cain had killed his brother,
The stars and flowers, the poets say,
Agreed with one another

To cheat the cunning tempter's art,
And teach the race its duty,
By keeping on its wicked heart
Their eyes of light and beauty.

A million sleepless lids, they say,
Will be at least a warning;
And so the flowers would watch by day,
The stars from eve to morning.

On hill and prairie, field and lawn,
  Their dewy eyes upturning,
The flowers still watch from reddening dawn
  Till western skies are burning.

Alas! each hour of daylight tells
  A tale of shame so crushing,
That some turn white as sea-bleached shells,
  And some are always blushing.

But when the patient stars look down
  On all their light discovers,
The traitor's smile, the murderer's frown,
  The lips of lying lovers,

They try to shut their saddening eyes,
  And in the vain endeavor
We see them twinkling in the skies,
  And so they wink forever.

A GOOD TIME GOING!

BRAVE singer of the coming time,
  Sweet minstrel of the joyous present,
Crowned with the noblest wreath of rhyme,
  The holly-leaf of Ayrshire's peasant,
Good by! Good by! — Our hearts and hands,
  Our lips in honest Saxon phrases,
Cry, God be with him, till he stands
  His feet among the English daisies!

'T is here we part ; — for other eyes
The busy deck, the fluttering streamer,
The dripping arms that plunge and rise,
The waves in foam, the ship in tremor,
The kerchiefs waving from the pier,
The cloudy pillar gliding o'er him,
The deep blue desert, lone and drear,
With heaven above and home before him!

His home! — the Western giant smiles,
And twirls the spotty globe to find it; —
This little speck the British Isles?
'T is but a freckle, — never mind it!
He laughs, and all his prairies roll,
Each gurgling cataract roars and chuckles,
And ridges stretched from pole to pole
Heave till they crack their iron knuckles!

But Memory blushes at the sneer,
And Honor turns with frown defiant,
And Freedom, leaning on her spear,
Laughs louder than the laughing giant:
"An islet is a world," she said,
"When glory with its dust has blended,
And Britain keeps her noble dead
Till earth and seas and skies are rended!"

Beneath each swinging forest-bough
Some arm as stout in death reposes, —
From wave-washed foot to heaven-kissed brow
Her valor's life-blood runs in roses;

Nay, let our brothers of the West
  Write smiling in their florid pages,
One half her soil has walked the rest
  In poets, heroes, martyrs, sages!

Hugged in the clinging billow's clasp,
  From sea-weed fringe to mountain heather,
The British oak with rooted grasp
  Her slender handful holds together; —
With cliffs of white and bowers of green,
  And Ocean narrowing to caress her,
And hills and threaded streams between, —
  Our little mother isle, God bless her!

In earth's broad temple where we stand,
  Fanned by the eastern gales that brought us,
We hold the missal in our hand,
  Bright with the lines our Mother taught us.
Where'er its blazoned page betrays
  The glistening links of gilded fetters,
Behold, the half-turned leaf displays
  Her rubric stained in crimson letters!

Enough! To speed a parting friend
  'T is vain alike to speak and listen; —
Yet stay, — these feeble accents blend
  With rays of light from eyes that glisten.
Good by! once more, — and kindly tell
  In words of peace the young world's story, —
And say, besides, we love too well
  Our mothers' soil, our fathers' glory!

THE LAST BLOSSOM

THOUGH young no more, we still would dream
Of beauty's dear deluding wiles;
The leagues of life to graybeards seem
Shorter than boyhood's lingering miles.

Who knows a woman's wild caprice?
It played with Goethe's silvered hair,
And many a Holy Father's "niece"
Has softly smoothed the papal chair.

When sixty bids us sigh in vain
To melt the heart of sweet sixteen,
We think upon those ladies twain
Who loved so well the tough old Dean.

We see the Patriarch's wintry face,
The maid of Egypt's dusky glow,
And dream that Youth and Age embrace,
As April violets fill with snow.

Tranced in her lord's Olympian smile
His lotus-loving Memphian lies, —
The musky daughter of the Nile,
With plaited hair and almond eyes.

Might we but share one wild caress
Ere life's autumnal blossoms fall,
And Earth's brown, clinging lips impress
The long cold kiss that waits us all!

My bosom heaves, remembering yet
  The morning of that blissful day,
When Rose, the flower of spring, I met,
  And gave my raptured soul away.

Flung from her eyes of purest blue,
  A lasso, with its leaping chain,
Light as a loop of larkspurs, flew
  O'er sense and spirit, heart and brain.

Thou com'st to cheer my waning age,
  Sweet vision, waited for so long!
Dove that would seek the poet's cage
  Lured by the magic breath of song!

She blushes! Ah, reluctant maid,
  Love's *drapeau rouge* the truth has told!
O'er girlhood's yielding barricade
  Floats the great Leveller's crimson fold!

Come to my arms! — love heeds not years;
  No frost the bud of passion knows.
Ha! what is this my frenzy hears?
  A voice behind me uttered, — Rose!

Sweet was her smile, — but not for me;
  Alas! when woman looks *too* kind,
Just turn your foolish head and see, —
  Some youth is walking close behind!

CONTENTMENT

"Man wants but little here below"

LITTLE I ask; my wants are few;
I only wish a hut of stone,
(A *very plain* brown stone will do,)
That I may call my own; —
And close at hand is such a one,
In yonder street that fronts the sun.

Plain food is quite enough for me;
Three courses are as good as ten; —
If Nature can subsist on three,
Thank Heaven for three. Amen!
I always thought cold victual nice; —
My *choice* would be vanilla-ice.

I care not much for gold or land; —
Give me a mortgage here and there, —
Some good bank-stock, some note of hand,
Or trifling railroad share, —
I only ask that Fortune send
A *little* more than I shall spend.

Honors are silly toys, I know,
And titles are but empty names;
I would, *perhaps*, be Plenipo, —
But only near St. James;
I 'm very sure I should not care
To fill our Gubernator's chair.

Jewels are baubles; 't is a sin
  To care for such unfruitful things; —
One good-sized diamond in a pin, —
  Some, *not so large*, in rings, —
A ruby, and a pearl, or so,
Will do for me; — I laugh at show.

My dame should dress in cheap attire;
  (Good, heavy silks are never dear;) —
I own perhaps I *might* desire
  Some shawls of true Cashmere, —
Some marrowy crapes of China silk,
Like wrinkled skins on scalded milk.

I would not have the horse I drive
  So fast that folks must stop and stare;
An easy gait — two, forty-five —
  Suits me; I do not care; —
Perhaps, for just a *single spurt*,
Some seconds less would do no hurt.

Of pictures, I should like to own
  Titians and Raphaels three or four, —
I love so much their style and tone,
  One Turner, and no more,
(A landscape, — foreground golden dirt, —
The sunshine painted with a squirt.)

Of books but few, — some fifty score
  For daily use, and bound for wear;
The rest upon an upper floor; —
  Some *little* luxury *there*

Of red morocco's gilded gleam
And vellum rich as country cream

Busts, cameos, gems, — such things as these,
Which others often show for pride,
I value for their power to please,
And selfish churls deride; —
One Stradivarius, I confess,
Two Meerschaums, I would fain possess.

Wealth's wasteful tricks I will not learn,
Nor ape the glittering upstart fool; —
Shall not carved tables serve my turn,
But *all* must be of buhl?
Give grasping pomp its double share, —
I ask but *one* recumbent chair.

Thus humble let me live and die,
Nor long for Midas' golden touch;
If Heaven more generous gifts deny,
I shall not miss them *much*, —
Too grateful for the blessing lent
Of simple tastes and mind content!

ÆSTIVATION

AN UNPUBLISHED POEM, BY MY LATE LATIN TUTOR

In candent ire the solar splendor flames;
The foles, languescent, pend from arid rames;
His humid front the cive, anheling, wipes,
And dreams of erring on ventiferous ripes.

How dulce to vive occult to mortal eyes,
Dorm on the herb with none to supervise,
Carp the suave berries from the crescent vine,
And bibe the flow from longicaudate kine!

To me, alas! no verdurous visions come,
Save yon exiguous pool's conferva-scum, —
No concave vast repeats the tender hue
That laves my milk-jug with celestial blue!

Me wretched! Let me curr to quercine shades!
Effund your albid hausts, lactiferous maids!
Oh, might I vole to some umbrageous clump, —
Depart, — be off, — excede, — evade, — erump!

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE

OR, THE WONDERFUL "ONE-HOSS SHAY"

A LOGICAL STORY

HAVE you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,
That was built in such a logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then, of a sudden, it — ah, but stay,
I 'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits, —
Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive, —

Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot, —
In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace, — lurking still,
Find it somewhere you must and will, —
Above or below, or within or without, —
And that 's the reason, beyond a doubt,
That a chaise *breaks down*, but does n't *wear out*.

But the Deacon swore (as Deacons do,
With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell *yeou*")
He would build one shay to beat the taown
'n' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';
It should be so built that it *couldn'* break daown:
"Fur," said the Deacon, " 't 's mighty plain
Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;
'n' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,
Is only jest
T' make that place uz strong uz the rest."

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
Where he could find the strongest oak,
That could n't be split nor bent nor broke, —

That was for spokes and floor and sills;
He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees,
The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,
But lasts like iron for things like these;
The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum,"--
Last of its timber, — they could n't sell 'em,
Never an axe had seen their chips,
And the wedges flew from between their lips,
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
Found in the pit when the tanner died.
That was the way he "put her through."
"There!" said the Deacon, "naow she 'll dew!"

Do! I tell you, I rather guess
She was a wonder, and nothing less!
Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
Children and grandchildren — where were they?
But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED; — it came and found
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.
Eighteen hundred increased by ten; —
"Hahnsum kerridge" they called it then.
Eighteen hundred and twenty came; —

Running as usual; much the same.
Thirty and forty at last arrive,
And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.

Little of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact, there 's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
(This is a moral that runs at large;
Take it. — You 're welcome. — No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER, — the Earthquake-day, —
There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,
A general flavor of mild decay,
But nothing local, as one may say.
There could n't be, — for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part
That there was n't a chance for one to start.
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
And the panels just as strong as the floor,
And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,
And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,
And spring and axle and hub *encore*.
And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt
In another hour it will be *worn out!*

First of November, 'Fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys, get out of the way!
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,

Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
"Huddup!" said the parson. — Off went they.
The parson was working his Sunday's text, —
Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
At what the — Moses — was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill,—
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half past nine by the meet'n'-house clock,—
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!
What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill and ground!
You see, of course, if you 're not a dunce,
How it went to pieces all at once, —
All at once, and nothing first, —
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
Logic is logic. That 's all I say.

PARSON TURELL'S LEGACY

OR, THE PRESIDENT'S OLD ARM-CHAIR

A MATHEMATICAL STORY

FACTS respecting an old arm-chair.
At Cambridge. Is kept in the College there.
Seems but little the worse for wear.
That 's remarkable when I say

It was old in President Holyoke's day.
(One of his boys, perhaps you know,
Died, *at one hundred*, years ago.)
He took lodgings for rain or shine
Under green bed-clothes in '69.

Know old Cambridge? Hope you do.—
Born there? Don't say so! I was, too.
(Born in a house with a gambrel-roof,—
Standing still, if you must have proof.—
"Gambrel?—Gambrel?"—Let me beg
You 'll look at a horse's hinder leg,—
First great angle above the hoof,—
That 's the gambrel; hence gambrel-roof.)
Nicest place that ever was seen,—
Colleges red and Common green,
Sidewalks brownish with trees between.
Sweetest spot beneath the skies
When the canker-worms don't rise,—
When the dust, that sometimes flies
Into your mouth and ears and eyes,
In a quiet slumber lies,
Not in the shape of unbaked pies
Such as barefoot children prize.

A kind of harbor it seems to be,
Facing the flow of a boundless sea.
Rows of gray old Tutors stand
Ranged like rocks above the sand;
Rolling beneath them, soft and green,
Breaks the tide of bright sixteen,—
One wave, two waves, three waves, four,—
Sliding up the sparkling floor:

Then it ebbs to flow no more,
Wandering off from shore to shore
With its freight of golden ore!
Pleasant place for boys to play; —
Better keep your girls away;
Hearts get rolled as pebbles do
Which countless fingering waves pursue,
And every classic beach is strown
With heart-shaped pebbles of blood-red stone.

But this is neither here nor there;
I 'm talking about an old arm-chair.
You 've heard, no doubt, of PARSON TURELL?
Over at Medford he used to dwell;
Married one of the Mathers' folk;
Got with his wife a chair of oak,—
Funny old chair with seat like wedge,
Sharp behind and broad front edge, —
One of the oddest of human things,
Turned all over with knobs and rings,—
But heavy, and wide, and deep, and grand, —
Fit for the worthies of the land, —
Chief Justice Sewall a cause to try in,
Or Cotton Mather to sit — and lie — in.
Parson Turell bequeathed the same
To a certain student, — SMITH by name;
These were the terms, as we are told:
"Saide Smith saide Chaire to have and holde;
When he doth graduate, then to passe
To ye oldest Youth in ye Senior Classe.
On payment of " — (naming a certain sum) —
"By him to whom ye Chaire shall come;

He to ye oldest Senior next,
And soe forever," — (thus runs the text,) —
"But one Crown lesse then he gave to claime,
That being his Debte for use of same."

Smith transferred it to one of the BROWNS,
And took his money, — five silver crowns.
Brown delivered it up to MOORE,
Who paid, it is plain, not five, but four.
Moore made over the chair to LEE,
Who gave him crowns of silver three.
Lee conveyed it unto DREW,
And now the payment, of course, was two.
Drew gave up the chair to DUNN, —
All he got, as you see, was one.
Dunn released the chair to HALL,
And got by the bargain no crown at all.
And now it passed to a second BROWN,
Who took it and likewise *claimed a crown.*
When *Brown* conveyed it unto WARE,
Having had one crown, to make it fair,
He paid him two crowns to take the chair;
And *Ware*, being honest, (as all Wares be,)
He paid one POTTER, who took it, three.
Four got ROBINSON; five got DIX;
JOHNSON *primus* demanded six;
And so the sum kept gathering still
Till after the battle of Bunker's Hill.

When paper money became so cheap,
Folks would n't count it, but said "a heap,"
A certain RICHARDS, — the books declare, —
(A. M. in '90? I 've looked with care

Through the Triennial, — *name not there,*) —
This person, Richards, was offered then
Eightscore pounds, but would have ten;
Nine, I think, was the sum he took, —
Not quite certain, — but see the book.
By and by the wars were still,
But nothing had altered the Parson's will.
The old arm-chair was solid yet,
But saddled with such a monstrous debt!
Things grew quite too bad to bear,
Paying such sums to get rid of the chair!
But dead men's fingers hold awful tight,
And there was the will in black and white,
Plain enough for a child to spell.
What should be done no man could tell,
For the chair was a kind of nightmare curse,
And every season but made it worse.

As a last resort, to clear the doubt,
They got old GOVERNOR HANCOCK out.
The Governor came with his Lighthorse Troop
And his mounted truckmen, all cock-a-hoop;
Halberds glittered and colors flew,
French horns whinnied and trumpets blew,
The yellow fifes whistled between their teeth,
And the bumble-bee bass-drums boomed beneath;
So he rode with all his band,
Till the President met him, cap in hand.
The Governor "hefted" the crowns, and said, —
"A will is a will, and the Parson 's dead."
The Governor hefted the crowns. Said he, —
"There is your p'int. And here 's my fee.

These are the terms you must fulfil, —
On such conditions I BREAK THE WILL!"
The Governor mentioned what these should be.
(Just wait a minute and then you 'll see.)
The President prayed. Then all was still,
And the Governor rose and BROKE THE WILL!
"About those conditions?" Well, now you go
And do as I tell you, and then you 'll know.
Once a year, on Commencement day,
If you 'll only take the pains to stay,
You 'll see the President in the CHAIR,
Likewise the Governor sitting there.
The President rises; both old and young
May hear his speech in a foreign tongue,
The meaning whereof, as lawyers swear,
Is this: Can I keep this old arm-chair?
And then his Excellency bows,
As much as to say that he allows.
The Vice-Gub. next is called by name;
He bows like t' other, which means the same.
And all the officers round 'em bow,
As much as to say that *they* allow.
And a lot of parchments about the chair
Are handed to witnesses then and there,
And then the lawyers hold it clear
That the chair is safe for another year.

God bless you, Gentlemen! Learn to give
Money to colleges while you live.
Don't be silly and think you 'll try
To bother the colleges, when you die,

With codicil this, and codicil that,
That Knowledge may starve while Law grows fat;
For there never was pitcher that would n't spill,
And there 's always a flaw in a donkey's will!

ODE FOR A SOCIAL MEETING

WITH SLIGHT ALTERATIONS BY A TEETOTALER

COME! fill a fresh bumper, for why should we go
While the logwood ~~nectar~~ still reddens our cups as they flow?
Pour out the decoction ~~rich juices~~ still bright with the sun,
Till o'er the brimmed crystal the dye-stuff ~~rubies~~ shall run.

The half-ripened apples ~~purple-globed clusters~~ their life-dews have bled;
How sweet is the taste ~~breath~~ of the sugar of lead ~~fragrance they shed!~~
For summer's rank poisons ~~last roses~~ lie hid in the *wines!!!* ~~wines~~
That were garnered by stable-boys smoking ~~maidens who laughed~~
long-nines ~~thro' the vines.~~

Then a scowl ~~smile,~~ and a howl ~~glass,~~ and a scoff ~~toast,~~ and a sneer ~~cheer,~~
For all the strychnine and whiskey, and ratsbane and beer! ~~good wine, and we 've some of it here!~~
In cellar, in pantry, in attic, in hall,
Down, down with the tyrant that masters us all! ~~Long live the gay servant that laughs for us all!~~

POEMS FROM THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE

1858–1859

UNDER THE VIOLETS

HER hands are cold; her face is white;
No more her pulses come and go;
Her eyes are shut to life and light; —
Fold the white vesture, snow on snow,
And lay her where the violets blow.

But not beneath a graven stone,
To plead for tears with alien eyes;
A slender cross of wood alone
Shall say, that here a maiden lies
In peace beneath the peaceful skies.

And gray old trees of hugest limb
Shall wheel their circling shadows round
To make the scorching sunlight dim
That drinks the greenness from the ground,
And drop their dead leaves on her mound.

When o'er their boughs the squirrels run,
And through their leaves the robins call,

And, ripening in the autumn sun,
The acorns and the chestnuts fall,
Doubt not that she will heed them all.

For her the morning choir shall sing
Its matins from the branches high,
And every minstrel-voice of Spring,
That trills beneath the April sky,
Shall greet her with its earliest cry.

When, turning round their dial-track,
Eastward the lengthening shadows pass,
Her little mourners, clad in black,
The crickets, sliding through the grass,
Shall pipe for her an evening mass.

At last the rootlets of the trees
Shall find the prison where she lies,
And bear the buried dust they seize
In leaves and blossoms to the skies.
So may the soul that warmed it rise!

If any, born of kindlier blood,
Should ask, What maiden lies below?
Say only this: A tender bud,
That tried to blossom in the snow,
Lies withered where the violets blow.

HYMN OF TRUST

O LOVE Divine, that stooped to share
  Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear,
On Thee we cast each earth-born care,
  We smile at pain while Thou art near!

Though long the weary way we tread,
  And sorrow crown each lingering year,
No path we shun, no darkness dread,
  Our hearts still whispering, Thou art near!

When drooping pleasure turns to grief,
  And trembling faith is changed to fear,
The murmuring wind, the quivering leaf,
  Shall softly tell us, Thou art near!

On Thee we fling our burdening woe,
  O Love Divine, forever dear,
Content to suffer while we know,
  Living and dying, Thou art near!

A SUN-DAY HYMN

LORD of all being! throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Centre and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!

Sun of our life, thy quickening ray
Sheds on our path the glow of day;

Star of our hope, thy softened light
Cheers the long watches of the night.

Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn;
Our noontide is thy gracious dawn;
Our rainbow arch thy mercy's sign;
All, save the clouds of sin, are thine!

Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,
Before thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no lustre of our own.

Grant us thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,
Till all thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame!

THE CROOKED FOOTPATH

Ah, here it is! the sliding rail
That marks the old remembered spot, —
The gap that struck our school-boy trail, —
The crooked path across the lot.

It left the road by school and church,
A pencilled shadow, nothing more,
That parted from the silver-birch
And ended at the farm-house door.

No line or compass traced its plan;
With frequent bends to left or right,

In aimless, wayward curves it ran,
  But always kept the door in sight.

The gabled porch, with woodbine green, —
  The broken millstone at the sill, —
Though many a rood might stretch between,
  The truant child could see them still.

No rocks across the pathway lie, —
  No fallen trunk is o'er it thrown, —
And yet it winds, we know not why,
  And turns as if for tree or stone.

Perhaps some lover trod the way
  With shaking knees and leaping heart, —
And so it often runs astray
  With sinuous sweep or sudden start.

Or one, perchance, with clouded brain
  From some unholy banquet reeled, —
And since, our devious steps maintain
  His track across the trodden field.

Nay, deem not thus, — no earthborn will
  Could ever trace a faultless line;
Our truest steps are human still, —
  To walk unswerving were divine!

Truants from love, we dream of wrath; —
  Oh, rather let us trust the more!
Through all the wanderings of the path,
  We still can see our Father's door!

IRIS, HER BOOK

I PRAY thee by the soul of her that bore thee,
By thine own sister's spirit I implore thee,
Deal gently with the leaves that lie before thee!

For Iris had no mother to infold her,
Nor ever leaned upon a sister's shoulder,
Telling the twilight thoughts that Nature told her.

She had not learned the mystery of awaking
Those chorded keys that soothe a sorrow's aching,
Giving the dumb heart voice, that else were breaking.

Yet lived, wrought, suffered. Lo, the pictured token!
Why should her fleeting day-dreams fade unspoken,
Like daffodils that die with sheaths unbroken?

She knew not love, yet lived in maiden fancies, —
Walked simply clad, a queen of high romances,
And talked strange tongues with angels in her trances.

Twin-souled she seemed, a twofold nature wearing:
Sometimes a flashing falcon in her daring,
Then a poor mateless dove that droops despairing.

Questioning all things: Why her Lord had sent her?

What were these torturing gifts, and wherefore lent her?
Scornful as spirit fallen, its own tormentor.

And then all tears and anguish: Queen of Heaven,
Sweet Saints, and Thou by mortal sorrows riven,
Save me! Oh, save me! Shall I die forgiven?

And then — Ah, God! But nay, it little matters:
Look at the wasted seeds that autumn scatters,
The myriad germs that Nature shapes and shatters!

If she had — Well! She longed, and knew not wherefore.
Had the world nothing she might live to care for?
No second self to say her evening prayer for?

She knew the marble shapes that set men dreaming,
Yet with her shoulders bare and tresses streaming
Showed not unlovely to her simple seeming.

Vain? Let it be so! Nature was her teacher.
What if a lonely and unsistered creature
Loved her own harmless gift of pleasing feature,

Saying, unsaddened, — This shall soon be faded,
And double-hued the shining tresses braided,
And all the sunlight of the morning shaded?

This her poor book is full of saddest follies,
Of tearful smiles and laughing melancholies,
With summer roses twined and wintry hollies.

In the strange crossing of uncertain chances,
Somewhere, beneath some maiden's tear-dimmed glances
May fall her little book of dreams and fancies.

Sweet sister! Iris, who shall never name thee,
Trembling for fear her open heart may shame thee,
Speaks from this vision-haunted page to claim thee.

Spare her, I pray thee! If the maid is sleeping,
Peace with her! she has had her hour of weeping.
No more! She leaves her memory in thy keeping.

ROBINSON OF LEYDEN

He sleeps not here; in hope and prayer
His wandering flock had gone before,
But he, the shepherd, might not share
Their sorrows on the wintry shore.

Before the Speedwell's anchor swung,
Ere yet the Mayflower's sail was spread,
While round his feet the Pilgrims clung,
The pastor spake, and thus he said: —

"Men, brethren, sisters, children dear!
God calls you hence from over sea;
Ye may not build by Haerlem Meer,
Nor yet along the Zuyder-Zee.

"Ye go to bear the saving word
To tribes unnamed and shores untrod;
Heed well the lessons ye have heard
From those old teachers taught of God.

"Yet think not unto them was lent
All light for all the coming days,
And Heaven's eternal wisdom spent
In making straight the ancient ways;

"The living fountain overflows
For every flock, for every lamb,
Nor heeds, though angry creeds oppose
With Luther's dike or Calvin's dam."

He spake; with lingering, long embrace,
With tears of love and partings fond,
They floated down the creeping Maas,
Along the isle of Ysselmond.

They passed the frowning towers of Briel,
The "Hook of Holland's" shelf of sand,
And grated soon with lifting keel
The sullen shores of Fatherland.

No home for these! — too well they knew
The mitred king behind the throne; —
The sails were set, the pennons flew,
And westward ho! for worlds unknown.

And these were they who gave us birth,
The Pilgrims of the sunset wave,

Who won for us this virgin earth,
And freedom with the soil they gave.

The pastor slumbers by the Rhine, —
In alien earth the exiles lie, —
Their nameless graves our holiest shrine,
His words our noblest battle-cry!

Still cry them, and the world shall hear,
Ye dwellers by the storm-swept sea!
Ye *have* not built by Haerlem Meer,
Nor on the land-locked Zuyder-Zee!

ST. ANTHONY THE REFORMER

HIS TEMPTATION

No fear lest praise should make us proud!
We know how cheaply that is won;
The idle homage of the crowd
Is proof of tasks as idly done.

A surface-smile may pay the toil
That follows still the conquering Right,
With soft, white hands to dress the spoil
That sun-browned valor clutched in fight.

Sing the sweet song of other days,
Serenely placid, safely true,
And o'er the present's parching ways
The verse distils like evening dew.

But speak in words of living power, —
They fall like drops of scalding rain
That plashed before the burning shower
Swept o'er the cities of the plain!

Then scowling Hate turns deadly pale, —
Then Passion's half-coiled adders spring,
And, smitten through their leprous mail,
Strike right and left in hope to sting.

If thou, unmoved by poisoning wrath,
Thy feet on earth, thy heart above,
Canst walk in peace thy kingly path,
Unchanged in trust, unchilled in love, —

Too kind for bitter words to grieve,
Too firm for clamor to dismay,
When Faith forbids thee to believe,
And Meekness calls to disobey, —

Ah, then beware of mortal pride!
The smiling pride that calmly scorns
Those foolish fingers, crimson dyed
In laboring on thy crown of thorns!

THE OPENING OF THE PIANO

In the little southern parlor of the house you may have seen
With the gambrel-roof, and the gable looking westward to the green,

At the side toward the sunset, with the window on its right,
Stood the London-made piano I am dreaming of to-night!

Ah me! how I remember the evening when it came!
What a cry of eager voices, what a group of cheeks in flame,
When the wondrous box was opened that had come from over seas,
With its smell of mastic-varnish and its flash of ivory keys!

Then the children all grew fretful in the restlessness of joy,
For the boy would push his sister, and the sister crowd the boy,
Till the father asked for quiet in his grave paternal way,
But the mother hushed the tumult with the words, "Now, Mary, play."

For the dear soul knew that music was a very sovereign balm;
She had sprinkled it over Sorrow and seen its brow grow calm,
In the days of slender harpsichords with tapping tinkling quills,
Or carolling to her spinet with its thin metallic thrills.

So Mary, the household minstrel, who always loved to please,
Sat down to the new "Clementi," and struck the glittering keys.
Hushed were the children's voices, and every eye grew dim,
As, floating from lip and finger, arose the "Vesper Hymn."

Catharine, child of a neighbor, curly and rosy-red,
(Wedded since, and a widow, — something like ten years dead,)
Hearing a gush of music such as none before,
Steals from her mother's chamber and peeps at the open door.

Just as the "Jubilate" in threaded whisper dies,
"Open it! open it, lady!" the little maiden cries,
(For she thought 't was a singing creature caged in a box she heard,)
"Open it! open it, lady! and let me see the *bird!*"

MIDSUMMER

HERE! sweep these foolish leaves away,
I will not crush my brains to-day!
Look! are the southern curtains drawn?
Fetch me a fan, and so begone!

Not that, — the palm-tree's rustling leaf
Brought from a parching coral-reef!

Its breath is heated; — I would swing
The broad gray plumes, — the eagle's wing.

I hate these roses' feverish blood! —
Pluck me a half-blown lily-bud,
A long-stemmed lily from the lake,
Cold as a coiling water-snake.

Rain me sweet odors on the air,
And wheel me up my Indian chair,
And spread some book not overwise
Flat out before my sleepy eyes.

Who knows it not, — this dead recoil
Of weary fibres stretched with toil, —
The pulse that flutters faint and low
When Summer's seething breezes blow!

O Nature! bare thy loving breast,
And give thy child one hour of rest, —
One little hour to lie unseen
Beneath thy scarf of leafy green!

So, curtained by a singing pine,
Its murmuring voice shall blend with mine,
Till, lost in dreams, my faltering lay
In sweeter music dies away.

DE SAUTY

AN ELECTRO-CHEMICAL ECLOGUE

The first messages received through the submarine cable were sent by an electrical expert, a mysterious personage who signed himself De Sauty.

Professor *Blue-Nose*

PROFESSOR

TELL me, O Provincial! speak, Ceruleo-Nasal!
Lives there one De Sauty extant now among you,
Whispering Boanerges, son of silent thunder,
Holding talk with nations?

Is there a De Sauty ambulant on Tellus,
Bifid-cleft like mortals, dormient in nightcap,
Having sight, smell, hearing, food-receiving feature
Three times daily patent?

Breathes there such a being, O Ceruleo-Nasal?
Or is he a *mythus*, — ancient word for "humbug," —
Such as Livy told about the wolf that wet-nursed
Romulus and Remus?

Was he born of woman, this alleged De Sauty?
Or a living product of galvanic action,
Like the *acarus* bred in Crosse's flint-solution?
Speak, thou Cyano-Rhinal!

BLUE-NOSE

Many things thou askest, jackknife-bearing stranger,
Much-conjecturing mortal, pork-and-treacle-waster!
Pretermit thy whittling, wheel thine ear-flap toward me,
Thou shall hear them answered.

When the charge galvanic tingled through the cable,
At the polar focus of the wire electric
Suddenly appeared a white-faced man among us:
Called himself "DE SAUTY."

As the small opossum held in pouch maternal
Grasps the nutrient organ whence the term *mammalia*,
So the unknown stranger held the wire electric,
Sucking in the current.

When the current strengthened, bloomed the pale-faced stranger, —
Took no drink nor victual, yet grew fat and rosy, —
And from time to time, in sharp articulation,
Said, "*All right!* DE SAUTY."

From the lonely station passed the utterance, spreading
Through the pines and hemlocks to the groves of steeples,

Till the land was filled with loud reverberations
Of "*All right!* De Sauty."

When the current slackened, drooped the mystic stranger, —
Faded, faded, faded, as the stream grew weaker, —
Wasted to a shadow, with a hartshorn odor
Of disintegration.

Drops of deliquescence glistened on his forehead,
Whitened round his feet the dust of efflorescence,
Till one Monday morning, when the flow suspended,
There was no De Sauty.

Nothing but a cloud of elements organic,
C. O. H. N. Ferrum, Chlor. Flu. Sil. Potassa,
Calc. Sod. Phosph. Mag. Sulphur, Mang. (?)
Alumin. (?) Cuprum, (?)
Such as man is made of.

Born of stream galvanic, with it he had perished!
There is no De Sauty now there is no current!
Give us a new cable, then again we 'll hear him
Cry, "*All right!* De Sauty."

POEMS FROM THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE

1871–1872

HOMESICK IN HEAVEN

THE DIVINE VOICE

Go seek thine earth-born sisters, — thus the Voice
That all obey, — the sad and silent three;
These only, while the hosts of Heaven rejoice,
Smile never; ask them what their sorrows be;

And when the secret of their griefs they tell,
Look on them with thy mild, half-human eyes;
Say what thou wast on earth; thou knowest well;
So shall they cease from unavailing sighs.

THE ANGEL

Why thus, apart, — the swift-winged herald spake, —
Sit ye with silent lips and unstrung lyres
While the trisagion's blending chords awake
In shouts of joy from all the heavenly choirs?

THE FIRST SPIRIT

Chide not thy sisters, — thus the answer came; —
  Children of earth, our half-weaned nature clings
To earth's fond memories, and her whispered name
  Untunes our quivering lips, our saddened strings;

For there we loved, and where we love is home,
  Home that our feet may leave, but not our hearts,
Though o'er us shine the jasper-lighted dome: —
  The chain may lengthen, but it never parts!

Sometimes a sunlit sphere comes rolling by,
  And then we softly whisper, — *can it be?*
And leaning toward the silvery orb, we try
  To hear the music of its murmuring sea;

To catch, perchance, some flashing glimpse of green,
  Or breathe some wild-wood fragrance, wafted through
The opening gates of pearl, that fold between
  The blinding splendors and the changeless blue.

THE ANGEL

Nay, sister, nay! a single healing leaf
  Plucked from the bough of yon twelve-fruited tree
Would soothe such anguish, — deeper stabbing grief
  Has pierced thy throbbing heart —

THE FIRST SPIRIT

Ah, woe is me!
I from my clinging babe was rudely torn;
His tender lips a loveless bosom pressed;
Can I forget him in my life new born?
Oh that my darling lay upon my breast!

THE ANGEL

And thou? —

THE SECOND SPIRIT

I was a fair and youthful bride,
The kiss of love still burns upon my cheek,
He whom I worshipped, ever at my side, —
Him through the spirit realm in vain I seek.

Sweet faces turn their beaming eyes on mine;
Ah! not in these the wished-for look I read;
Still for that one dear human smile I pine;
Thou and none other! — is the lover's creed.

THE ANGEL

And whence *thy* sadness in a world of bliss
Where never parting comes, nor mourner's tear?
Art thou, too, dreaming of a mortal's kiss
Amid the seraphs of the heavenly sphere?

THE THIRD SPIRIT

Nay, tax not me with passion's wasting fire;
When the swift message set my spirit free,
Blind, helpless, lone, I left my gray-haired sire;
My friends were many, he had none save me.

I left him, orphaned, in the starless night;
Alas, for him no cheerful morning's dawn!
I wear the ransomed spirit's robe of white,
Yet still I hear him moaning, *She is gone!*

THE ANGEL

Ye know me not, sweet sisters? — All in vain
Ye seek your lost ones in the shapes they wore;
The flower once opened may not bud again,
The fruit once fallen finds the stem no more.

Child, lover, sire, — yea, all things loved below, —
Fair pictures damasked on a vapor's fold, —
Fade like the roseate flush, the golden glow,
When the bright curtain of the day is rolled.

I was the babe that slumbered on *thy* breast.
And, sister, mine the lips that called *thee* bride.
Mine were the silvered locks *thy* hand caressed,
That faithful hand, my faltering footstep's guide!

Each changing form, frail vesture of decay,
The soul unclad forgets it once hath worn,
Stained with the travel of the weary day,
And shamed with rents from every wayside thorn.

To lie, an infant, in *thy* fond embrace, —
To come with love's warm kisses back to *thee*, —

To show *thine* eyes thy gray-haired father's face,
Not Heaven itself could grant; this may not be!

Then spread your folded wings, and leave to earth
The dust once breathing ye have mourned so long,
Till Love, new risen, owns his heavenly birth,
And sorrow's discords sweeten into song!

FANTASIA

THE YOUNG GIRL'S POEM

Kiss mine eyelids, beauteous Morn,
Blushing into life new-born!
Lend me violets for my hair,
And thy russet robe to wear,
And thy ring of rosiest hue
Set in drops of diamond dew!

Kiss my cheek, thou noontide ray,
From my Love so far away!
Let thy splendor streaming down
Turn its pallid lilies brown,
Till its darkening shades reveal
Where his passion pressed its seal!

Kiss my lips, thou Lord of light,
Kiss my lips a soft good-night!
Westward sinks thy golden car;
Leave me but the evening star,
And my solace that shall be,
Borrowing all its light from thee!

AUNT TABITHA

THE YOUNG GIRL'S POEM

WHATEVER I do, and whatever I say,
Aunt Tabitha tells me that is n't the way;
When *she* was a girl (forty summers ago)
Aunt Tabitha tells me they never did so.

Dear aunt! If I only would take her advice!
But I like my own way, and I find it *so* nice!
And besides, I forget half the things I am told;
But they all will come back to me — when I am old.

If a youth passes by, it may happen, no doubt,
He may chance to look in as I chance to look out;
She would never endure an impertinent stare, —
It is *horrid*, she says, and I must n't sit there.

A walk in the moonlight has pleasures, I own,
But it is n't quite safe to be walking alone;
So I take a lad's arm, — just for safety, you know, —
But Aunt Tabitha tells me *they* did n't do so.

How wicked we are, and how good they were then!
They kept at arm's length those detestable men;
What an era of virtue she lived in! — But stay —
Were the *men* all such rogues in Aunt Tabitha's day?

If the men *were* so wicked, I 'll ask my papa
How he dared to propose to my darling mamma;
Was he like the rest of them? Goodness! Who knows?
And what shall *I* say, if a wretch should propose?

I am thinking if Aunt knew so little of sin,
What a wonder Aunt Tabitha's aunt must have been!
And her grand-aunt — it scares me — how shockingly sad
That we girls of to-day are so frightfully bad!

A martyr will save us, and nothing else can;
Let *me* perish — to rescue some wretched young man!
Though when to the altar a victim I go,
Aunt Tabitha 'll tell me *she* never did so!

WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS

FROM THE YOUNG ASTRONOMER'S POEM

I.

AMBITION

ANOTHER clouded night; the stars are hid,
The orb that waits my search is hid with them.
Patience! Why grudge an hour, a month, a year,
To plant my ladder and to gain the round
That leads my footsteps to the heaven of fame,
Where waits the wreath my sleepless midnights won?

Not the stained laurel such as heroes wear
That withers when some stronger conqueror's heel
Treads down their shrivelling trophies in the dust;
But the fair garland whose undying green
Not time can change, nor wrath of gods or men!

With quickened heart-beats I shall hear the tongues
That speak my praise; but better far the sense
That in the unshaped ages, buried deep
In the dark mines of unaccomplished time
Yet to be stamped with morning's royal die
And coined in golden days, — in those dim years
I shall be reckoned with the undying dead,
My name emblazoned on the fiery arch,
Unfading till the stars themselves shall fade.
Then, as they call the roll of shining worlds,
Sages of race unborn in accents new
Shall count me with the Olympian ones of old,
Whose glories kindle through the midnight sky:
Here glows the God of Battles; this recalls
The Lord of Ocean, and yon far-off sphere
The Sire of Him who gave his ancient name
To the dim planet with the wondrous rings;
Here flames the Queen of Beauty's silver lamp,
And there the moon-girt orb of mighty Jove;
But *this*, unseen through all earth's æons past,
A youth who watched beneath the western star
Sought in the darkness, found, and shewed to men;
Linked with his name thenceforth and evermore!
So shall that name be syllabled anew
In all the tongues of all the tribes of men:

I that have been through immemorial years
Dust in the dust of my forgotten time
Shall live in accents shaped of blood-warm breath,
Yea, rise in mortal semblance, newly born
In shining stone, in undecaying bronze,
And stand on high, and look serenely down
On the new race that calls the earth its own.

Is this a cloud, that, blown athwart my soul,
Wears a false seeming of the pearly stain
Where worlds beyond the world their mingling rays
Blend in soft white, — a cloud that, born of earth,
Would cheat the soul that looks for light from heaven?
Must every coral-insect leave his sign
On each poor grain he lent to build the reef,
As Babel's builders stamped their sunburnt clay,
Or deem his patient service all in vain?
What if another sit beneath the shade
Of the broad elm I planted by the way, —
What if another heed the beacon light
I set upon the rock that wrecked my keel, —
Have I not done my task and served my kind?
Nay, rather act thy part, unnamed, unknown,
And let Fame blow her trumpet through the world
With noisy wind to swell a fool's renown,
Joined with some truth he stumbled blindly o'er,
Or coupled with some single shining deed
That in the great account of all his days
Will stand alone upon the bankrupt sheet
His pitying angel shows the clerk of Heaven.
The noblest service comes from nameless hands,

And the best servant does his work unseen.
Who found the seeds of fire and made them shoot,
Fed by his breath, in buds and flowers of flame?
Who forged in roaring flames the ponderous stone,
And shaped the moulded metal to his need?
Who gave the dragging car its rolling wheel,
And tamed the steed that whirls its circling round?
All these have left their work and not their names, —
Why should I murmur at a fate like theirs?
This is the heavenly light; the pearly stain
Was but a wind-cloud drifting o'er the stars!

II.

REGRETS

Brief glimpses of the bright celestial spheres,
False lights, false shadows, vague, uncertain gleams,
Pale vaporous mists, wan streaks of lurid flame,
The climbing of the upward-sailing cloud,
The sinking of the downward-falling star, —
All these are pictures of the changing moods
Borne through the midnight stillness of my soul.

Here am I, bound upon this pillared rock,
Prey to the vulture of a vast desire
That feeds upon my life. I burst my bands
And steal a moment's freedom from the beak,
The clinging talons and the shadowing plumes;
Then comes the false enchantress, with her song;

"Thou wouldst not lay thy forehead in the dust
Like the base herd that feeds and breeds and dies!
Lo, the fair garlands that I weave for thee,
Unchanging as the belt Orion wears,
Bright as the jewels of the seven-starred Crown,
The spangled stream of Berenice's hair!"
And so she twines the fetters with the flowers
Around my yielding limbs, and the fierce bird
Stoops to his quarry, — then to feed his rage
Of ravening hunger I must drain my blood
And let the dew-drenched, poison-breeding night
Steal all the freshness from my fading cheek,
And leave its shadows round my caverned eyes.
All for a line in some unheeded scroll;
All for a stone that tells to gaping clowns,
"Here lies a restless wretch beneath a clod
Where squats the jealous nightmare men call
Fame!"

I marvel not at him who scorns his kind
And thinks not sadly of the time foretold
When the old hulk we tread shall be a wreck,
A slag, a cinder drifting through the sky
Without its crew of fools! We live too long,
And even so are not content to die,
But load the mould that covers up our bones
With stones that stand like beggars by the road
And show death's grievous wound and ask for
tears;
Write our great books to teach men who we are,
Sing our fine songs that tell in artful phrase
The secrets of our lives, and plead and pray

For alms of memory with the after time,
Those few swift seasons while the earth shall wear
Its leafy summers, ere its core grows cold
And the moist life of all that breathes shall die;
Or as the new-born seer, perchance more wise,
Would have us deem, before its growing mass,
Pelted with star-dust, stoned with meteor-balls,
Heats like a hammered anvil, till at last
Man and his works and all that stirred itself
Of its own motion, in the fiery glow
Turns to a flaming vapor, and our orb
Shines a new sun for earths that shall be born.

I am as old as Egypt to myself,
Brother to them that squared the pyramids
By the same stars I watch. I read the page
Where every letter is a glittering world,
With them who looked from Shinar's clay-built towers,
Ere yet the wanderer of the Midland sea
Had missed the fallen sister of the seven.
I dwell in spaces vague, remote, unknown,
Save to the silent few, who, leaving earth,
Quit all communion with their living time.
I lose myself in that ethereal void,
Till I have tired my wings and long to fill
My breast with denser air, to stand, to walk
With eyes not raised above my fellow-men.
Sick of my unwalled, solitary realm,
I ask to change the myriad lifeless worlds
I visit as mine own for one poor patch
Of this dull spheroid and a little breath

To shape in word or deed to serve my kind.
Was ever giant's dungeon dug so deep,
Was ever tyrant's fetter forged so strong,
Was e'er such deadly poison in the draught
The false wife mingles for the trusting fool,
As he whose willing victim is himself,
Digs, forges, mingles, for his captive soul?

III.

SYMPATHIES

THE snows that glittered on the disk of Mars
Have melted, and the planet's fiery orb
Rolls in the crimson summer of its year;
But what to me the summer or the snow
Of worlds that throb with life in forms unknown,
If life indeed be theirs; I heed not these.
My heart is simply human; all my care
For them whose dust is fashioned like mine own;
These ache with cold and hunger, live in pain,
And shake with fear of worlds more full of woe;
There may be others worthier of my love,
But such I know not save through these I know.

There are two veils of language, hid beneath
Whose sheltering folds, we dare to be ourselves;
And not that other self which nods and smiles
And babbles in our name; the one is Prayer,
Lending its licensed freedom to the tongue
That tells our sorrows and our sins to Heaven;
The other, Verse, that throws its spangled web

Around our naked speech and makes it bold.
I, whose best prayer is silence; sitting dumb
In the great temple where I nightly serve
Him who is throned in light, have dared to claim
The poet's franchise, though I may not hope
To wear his garland; hear me while I tell
My story in such form as poets use,
But breathed in fitful whispers, as the wind
Sighs and then slumbers, wakes and sighs again.

Thou Vision, floating in the breathless air
Between me and the fairest of the stars,
I tell my lonely thoughts as unto thee.
Look not for marvels of the scholar's pen
In my rude measure; I can only show
A slender-margined, unillumined page,
And trust its meaning to the flattering eye
That reads it in the gracious light of love.
Ah, wouldst thou clothe thyself in breathing shape
And nestle at my side, my voice should lend
Whate'er my verse may lack of tender rhythm
To make thee listen.
I have stood entranced
When, with her fingers wandering o'er the keys,
The white enchantress with the golden hair
Breathed all her soul through some unvalued rhyme;
Some flower of song that long had lost its bloom;
Lo! its dead summer kindled as she sang!
The sweet contralto, like the ringdove's coo,
Thrilled it with brooding, fond, caressing tones,
And the pale minstrel's passion lived again,

Tearful and trembling as a dewy rose
The wind has shaken till it fills the air
With light and fragrance. Such the wondrous charm
A song can borrow when the bosom throbs
That lends it breath.
So from the poet's lips
His verse sounds doubly sweet, for none like him
Feels every cadence of its wave-like flow;
He lives the passion over, while he reads,
That shook him as he sang his lofty strain,
And pours his life through each resounding line,
As ocean, when the stormy winds are hushed,
Still rolls and thunders through his billowy caves.

IV.

MASTER AND SCHOLAR

LET me retrace the record of the years
That made me what I am. A man most wise,
But overworn with toil and bent with age,
Sought me to be his scholar, — me, run wild
From books and teachers, — kindled in my soul
The love of knowledge; led me to his tower,
Showed me the wonders of the midnight realm
His hollow sceptre ruled, or seemed to rule,
Taught me the mighty secrets of the spheres,
Trained me to find the glimmering specks of light
Beyond the unaided sense, and on my chart
To string them one by one, in order due,
As on a rosary a saint his beads.

I was his only scholar; I became
The echo to his thought; whate'er he knew
Was mine for asking; so from year to year
We wrought together, till there came a time
When I, the learner, was the master half
Of the twinned being in the dome-crowned tower.

Minds roll in paths like planets; they revolve,
This in a larger, that a narrower ring,
But round they come at last to that same phase,
That selfsame light and shade they showed before.
I learned his annual and his monthly tale,
His weekly axiom and his daily phrase,
I felt them coming in the laden air,
And watched them laboring up to vocal breath,
Even as the first-born at his father's board
Knows ere he speaks the too familiar jest
Is on its way, by some mysterious sign
Forewarned, the click before the striking bell.

He shrivelled as I spread my growing leaves,
Till trust and reverence changed to pitying care;
He lived for me in what he once had been,
But I for him, a shadow, a defence,
The guardian of his fame, his guide, his staff,
Leaned on so long he fell if left alone.
I was his eye, his ear, his cunning hand,
Love was my spur and longing after fame,
But this the goading thorn of sleepless age
That sees its shortening span, its lengthening shades,
That clutches what it may with eager grasp,

And drops at last with empty, outstretched hands.
All this he dreamed not. He would sit him down
Thinking to work his problems as of old,
And find the star he thought so plain a blur,
The columned figures labyrinthine wilds
Without my comment, blind and senseless scrawls
That vexed him with their riddles; he would strive
And struggle for a while, and then his eye
Would lose its light, and over all his mind
The cold gray mist would settle; and erelong
The darkness fell, and I was left alone.

V.

ALONE

ALONE! no climber of an Alpine cliff,
No Arctic venturer on the waveless sea,
Feels the dread stillness round him as it chills
The heart of him who leaves the slumbering earth
To watch the silent worlds that crowd the sky.

Alone! And as the shepherd leaves his flock
To feed upon the hillside, he meanwhile
Finds converse in the warblings of the pipe
Himself has fashioned for his vacant hour,
So have I grown companion to myself,
And to the wandering spirits of the air
That smile and whisper round us in our dreams.
Thus have I learned to search if I may know
The whence and why of all beneath the stars
And all beyond them, and to weigh my life

As in a balance, — poising good and ill
Against each other, — asking of the Power
That flung me forth among the whirling worlds,
If I am heir to any inborn right,
Or only as an atom of the dust
That every wind may blow where'er it will.

VI.

QUESTIONING

I AM not humble; I was shown my place,
Clad in such robes as Nature had at hand;
Took what she gave, not chose; I know no shame,
No fear for being simply what I am.
I am not proud, I hold my every breath
At Nature's mercy. I am as a babe
Borne in a giant's arms, he knows not where;
Each several heart-beat, counted like the coin
A miser reckons, is a special gift
As from an unseen hand; if that withhold
Its bounty for a moment, I am left
A clod upon the earth to which I fall.

Something I find in me that well might claim
The love of beings in a sphere above
This doubtful twilight world of right and wrong;
Something that shows me of the self-same clay
That creeps or swims or flies in humblest form.
Had I been asked, before I left my bed
Of shapeless dust, what clothing I would wear,
I would have said, More angel and less worm;

But for their sake who are even such as I,
Of the same mingled blood, I would not choose
To hate that meaner portion of myself
Which makes me brother to the least of men.

I dare not be a coward with my lips
Who dare to question all things in my soul;
Some men may find their wisdom on their knees,
Some prone and grovelling in the dust like slaves;
Let the meek glowworm glisten in the dew;
I ask to lift my taper to the sky
As they who hold their lamps above their heads,
Trusting the larger currents up aloft,
Rather than crossing eddies round their breast,
Threatening with every puff the flickering blaze.

My life shall be a challenge, not a truce!
This is my homage to the mightier powers,
To ask my boldest question, undismayed
By muttered threats that some hysteric sense
Of wrong or insult will convulse the throne
Where wisdom reigns supreme; and if I err,
They all must err who have to feel their way
As bats that fly at noon; for what are we
But creatures of the night, dragged forth by day,
Who needs must stumble, and with stammering steps
Spell out their paths in syllables of pain?

Thou wilt not hold in scorn the child who dares
Look up to Thee, the Father, — dares to ask
More than thy wisdom answers. From thy hand

The worlds were cast; yet every leaflet claims
From that same hand its little shining sphere
Of star-lit dew; thine image, the great sun,
Girt with his mantle of tempestuous flame,
Glares in mid-heaven; but to his noon-tide blaze
The slender violet lifts its lidless eye,
And from his splendor steals its fairest hue,
Its sweetest perfume from his scorching fire.

VII.

WORSHIP

FROM my lone turret as I look around
O'er the green meadows to the ring of blue,
From slope, from summit, and from half-hid vale
The sky is stabbed with dagger-pointed spires,
Their gilded symbols whirling in the wind,
Their brazen tongues proclaiming to the world,
"Here truth is sold, the only genuine ware;
See that it has our trade-mark! You will buy
Poison instead of food across the way,
The lies of ——" this or that, each several name
The standard's blazon and the battle-cry
Of some true-gospel faction, and again
The token of the Beast to all beside.
And grouped round each I see a huddling crowd
Alike in all things save the words they use;
In love, in longing, hate and fear the same.

Whom do we trust and serve? We speak of one
And bow to many; Athens still would find

The shrines of all she worshipped safe within
Our tall barbarian temples, and the thrones
That crowned Olympus mighty as of old.
The god of music rules the Sabbath choir;
The lyric muse must leave the sacred nine
To help us please the dilettante's ear;
Plutus limps homeward with us, as we leave
The portals of the temple where we knelt
And listened while the god of eloquence
(Hermes of ancient days, but now disguised
In sable vestments) with that other god
Somnus, the son of Erebus and Nox,
Fights in unequal contest for our souls;
The dreadful sovereign of the under world
Still shakes his sceptre at us, and we hear
The baying of the triple-throated hound;
Eros is young as ever, and as fair
The lovely Goddess born of ocean's foam.

These be thy gods, O Israel! Who is he,
The one ye name and tell us that ye serve,
Whom ye would call me from my lonely tower
To worship with the many-headed throng?
Is it the God that walked in Eden's grove
In the cool hour to seek our guilty sire?
The God who dealt with Abraham as the sons
Of that old patriarch deal with other men?
The jealous God of Moses, one who feels
An image as an insult, and is wroth
With him who made it and his child unborn?
The God who plagued his people for the sin
Of their adulterous king, beloved of him, —

The same who offers to a chosen few
The right to praise him in eternal song
While a vast shrieking world of endless woe
Blends its dread chorus with their rapturous hymn?
Is this the God ye mean, or is it he
Who heeds the sparrow's fall, whose loving heart
Is as the pitying father's to his child,
Whose lesson to his children is "Forgive,"
Whose plea for all, "They know not what they do"?

VIII.

MANHOOD

I CLAIM the right of knowing whom I serve,
Else is my service idle; He that asks
My homage asks it from a reasoning soul.
To crawl is not to worship; we have learned
A drill of eyelids, bended neck and knee,
Hanging our prayers on hinges, till we ape
The flexures of the many-jointed worm.
Asia has taught her Allahs and salaams
To the world's children, — we have grown to men!
We who have rolled the sphere beneath our feet
To find a virgin forest, as we lay
The beams of our rude temple, first of all
Must frame its doorway high enough for man
To pass unstooping; knowing as we do
That He who shaped us last of living forms
Has long enough been served by creeping things,
Reptiles that left their footprints in the sand

Of old sea-margins that have turned to stone,
And men who learned their ritual; we demand
To know Him first, then trust Him and then love
When we have found Him worthy of our love,
Tried by our own poor hearts and not before;
He must be truer than the truest friend,
He must be tenderer than a woman's love,
A father better than the best of sires;
Kinder than she who bore us, though we sin
Oftener than did the brother we are told
We — poor ill-tempered mortals — must forgive,
Though seven times sinning threescore times and ten.

This is the new world's gospel: Be ye men!
Try well the legends of the children's time;
Ye are the chosen people, God has led
Your steps across the desert of the deep
As now across the desert of the shore;
Mountains are cleft before you as the sea
Before the wandering tribe of Israel's sons;
Still onward rolls the thunderous caravan,
Its coming printed on the western sky,
A cloud by day, by night a pillared flame;
Your prophets are a hundred unto one
Of them of old who cried, "Thus saith the Lord;"
They told of cities that should fall in heaps,
But yours of mightier cities that shall rise
Where yet the lonely fishers spread their nets,
Where hides the fox and hoots the midnight owl;
The tree of knowledge in your garden grows
Not single, but at every humble door;

Its branches lend you their immortal food,
That fills you with the sense of what ye are,
No servants of an altar hewed and carved
From senseless stone by craft of human hands,
Rabbi, or dervish, brahmin, bishop, bonze,
But masters of the charm with which they work
To keep your hands from that forbidden tree!

Ye that have tasted that divinest fruit,
Look on this world of yours with opened eyes!
Ye are as gods! Nay, makers of your gods, —
Each day ye break an image in your shrine
And plant a fairer image where it stood:
Where is the Moloch of your fathers' creed,
Whose fires of torment burned for span-long babes?
Fit object for a tender mother's love!
Why not? It was a bargain duly made
For these same infants through the surety's act
Intrusted with their all for earth and heaven,
By Him who chose their guardian, knowing well
His fitness for the task, — this, even this,
Was the true doctrine only yesterday
As thoughts are reckoned, — and to-day you hear
In words that sound as if from human tongues
Those monstrous, uncouth horrors of the past
That blot the blue of heaven and shame the earth
As would the saurians of the age of slime,
Awaking from their stony sepulchres
And wallowing hateful in the eye of day!

IX.

RIGHTS

WHAT am I but the creature Thou hast made?
What have I save the blessings Thou hast lent?
What hope I but thy mercy and thy love?
Who but myself shall cloud my soul with fear?
Whose hand protect me from myself but thine?
I claim the rights of weakness, I, the babe,
Call on my sire to shield me from the ills
That still beset my path, not trying me
With snares beyond my wisdom or my strength,
He knowing I shall use them to my harm,
And find a tenfold misery in the sense
That in my childlike folly I have sprung
The trap upon myself as vermin use,
Drawn by the cunning bait to certain doom.
Who wrought the wondrous charm that leads us on
To sweet perdition, but the selfsame power
That set the fearful engine to destroy
His wretched offspring (as the Rabbis tell),
And hid its yawning jaws and treacherous springs
In such a show of innocent sweet flowers
It lured the sinless angels and they fell?
Ah! He who prayed the prayer of all mankind
Summed in those few brief words the mightiest plea
For erring souls before the courts of heaven, —
Save us from being tempted, — lest we fall!

If we are only as the potter's clay
Made to be fashioned as the artist wills,

And broken into shards if we offend
The eye of Him who made us, it is well;
Such love as the insensate lump of clay
That spins upon the swift-revolving wheel
Bears to the hand that shapes its growing form, —
Such love, no more, will be our hearts' return
To the great Master-workman for his care, —
Or would be, save that this, our breathing clay,
Is intertwined with fine innumerous threads
That make it conscious in its framer's hand;
And this He must remember who has filled
These vessels with the deadly draught of life, —
Life, that means death to all it claims. Our love
Must kindle in the ray that streams from heaven,
A faint reflection of the light divine;
The sun must warm the earth before the rose
Can show her inmost heart-leaves to the sun.

He yields some fraction of the Maker's right
Who gives the quivering nerve its sense of pain;
Is there not something in the pleading eye
Of the poor brute that suffers, which arraigns
The law that bids it suffer? Has it not
A claim for some remembrance in the book
That fills its pages with the idle words
Spoken of men? Or is it only clay,
Bleeding and aching in the potter's hand,
Yet all his own to treat it as He will
And when He will to cast it at his feet,
Shattered, dishonored, lost forevermore?
My dog loves me, but could he look beyond
His earthly master, would his love extend

To Him who — Hush! I will not doubt that He
Is better than our fears, and will not wrong
The least, the meanest of created things!

He would not trust me with the smallest orb
That circles through the sky; He would not give
A meteor to my guidance; would not leave
The coloring of a cloudlet to my hand;
He locks my beating heart beneath its bars
And keeps the key himself; He measures out
The draughts of vital breath that warm my blood,
Winds up the springs of instinct which uncoil,
Each in its season; ties me to my home,
My race, my time, my nation, and my creed
So closely that if I but slip my wrist
Out of the band that cuts it to the bone,
Men say, "He hath a devil;" He has lent
All that I hold in trust, as unto one
By reason of his weakness and his years
Not fit to hold the smallest shred in fee
Of those most common things he calls his own, —
And yet — my Rabbi tells me — He has left
The care of that to which a million worlds
Filled with unconscious life were less than naught,
Has left that mighty universe, the Soul,
To the weak guidance of our baby hands,
Let the foul fiends have access at their will,
Taking the shape of angels, to our hearts, —
Our hearts already poisoned through and through
With the fierce virus of ancestral sin;
Turned us adrift with our immortal charge,
To wreck ourselves in gulfs of endless woe.

If what my Rabbi tells me is the truth
Why did the choir of angels sing for joy?
Heaven must be compassed in a narrow space,
And offer more than room enough for all
That pass its portals; but the under-world,
The godless realm, the place where demons forge
Their fiery darts and adamantine chains,
Must swarm with ghosts that for a little while
Had worn the garb of flesh, and being heirs
Of all the dulness of their stolid sires,
And all the erring instincts of their tribe,
Nature's own teaching, rudiments of "sin,"
Fell headlong in the snare that could not fail
To trap the wretched creatures shaped of clay
And cursed with sense enough to lose their souls!
  Brother, thy heart is troubled at my word;
Sister, I see the cloud is on thy brow.
He will not blame me, He who sends not peace,
But sends a sword, and bids us strike amain
At Error's gilded crest, where in the van
Of earth's great army, mingling with the best
And bravest of its leaders, shouting loud
The battle-cries that yesterday have led
The host of Truth to victory, but to-day
Are watchwords of the laggard and the slave,
He leads his dazzled cohorts. God has made
This world a strife of atoms and of spheres;
With every breath I sigh myself away
And take my tribute from the wandering wind
To fan the flame of life's consuming fire;
So, while my thought has life, it needs must burn,
And, burning, set the stubble-fields ablaze,

Where all the harvest long ago was reaped
And safely garnered in the ancient barns.
But still the gleaners, groping for their food,
Go blindly feeling through the close-shorn straw,
While the young reapers flash their glittering steel
Where later suns have ripened nobler grain!

X.

TRUTHS

THE time is racked with birth-pangs; every hour
Brings forth some gasping truth, and truth new-born
Looks a misshapen and untimely growth,
The terror of the household and its shame,
A monster coiling in its nurse's lap
That some would strangle, some would only starve;
But still it breathes, and passed from hand to hand,
And suckled at a hundred half-clad breasts,
Comes slowly to its stature and its form,
Calms the rough ridges of its dragon-scales,
Changes to shining locks its snaky hair,
And moves transfigured into angel guise,
Welcomed by all that cursed its hour of birth,
And folded in the same encircling arms
That cast it like a serpent from their hold!

If thou wouldst live in honor, die in peace,
Have the fine words the marble-workers learn
To carve so well, upon thy funeral-stone,
And earn a fair obituary, dressed

In all the many-colored robes of praise,
Be deafer than the adder to the cry
Of that same foundling truth, until it grows
To seemly favor, and at length has won
The smiles of hard-mouthed men and light-lipped
dames;
Then snatch it from its meagre nurse's breast,
Fold it in silk and give it food from gold;
So shalt thou share its glory when at last
It drops its mortal vesture, and, revealed
In all the splendor of its heavenly form,
Spreads on the startled air its mighty wings!

Alas! how much that seemed immortal truth
That heroes fought for, martyrs died to save,
Reveals its earth-born lineage, growing old
And limping in its march, its wings unplumed,
Its heavenly semblance faded like a dream!
Here in this painted casket, just unsealed,
Lies what was once a breathing shape like thine,
Once loved as thou art loved; there beamed the eyes
That looked on Memphis in its hour of pride,
That saw the walls of hundred-gated Thebes,
And all the mirrored glories of the Nile.
See how they toiled that all-consuming time
Might leave the frame immortal in its tomb;
Filled it with fragrant balms and odorous gums
That still diffuse their sweetness through the air,
And wound and wound with patient fold on fold
The flaxen bands thy hand has rudely torn!
Perchance thou yet canst see the faded stain
Of the sad mourner's tear.

XI.

IDOLS

BUT what is this?
The sacred beetle, bound upon the breast
Of the blind heathen! Snatch the curious prize,
Give it a place among thy treasured spoils,
Fossil and relic, — corals, encrinites,
The fly in amber and the fish in stone,
The twisted circlet of Etruscan gold,
Medal, intaglio, poniard, poison-ring, —
Place for the Memphian beetle with thine hoard!

Ah! longer than thy creed has blest the world
This toy, thus ravished from thy brother's breast,
Was to the heart of Mizraim as divine,
As holy, as the symbol that we lay
On the still bosom of our white-robed dead,
And raise above their dust that all may know
Here sleeps an heir of glory. Loving friends,
With tears of trembling faith and choking sobs,
And prayers to those who judge of mortal deeds,
Wrapped this poor image in the cerement's fold
That Isis and Osiris, friends of man,
Might know their own and claim the ransomed soul.

An idol? Man was born to worship such!
An idol is an image of his thought;
Sometimes he carves it out of gleaming stone,
And sometimes moulds it out of glittering gold,

Or rounds it in a mighty frescoed dome,
Or lifts it heavenward in a lofty spire,
Or shapes it in a cunning frame of words,
Or pays his priest to make it day by day;
For sense must have its god as well as soul;
A new-born Dian calls for silver shrines,
And Egypt's holiest symbol is our own,
The sign we worship as did they of old
When Isis and Osiris ruled the world.

Let us be true to our most subtle selves,
We long to have our idols like the rest.
Think! when the men of Israel had their God
Encamped among them, talking with their chief,
Leading them in the pillar of the cloud
And watching o'er them in the shaft of fire,
They still must have an image; still they longed
For somewhat of substantial, solid form
Whereon to hang their garlands, and to fix
Their wandering thoughts and gain a stronger hold
For their uncertain faith, not yet assured
If those same meteors of the day and night
Were not mere exhalations of the soil.
  Are we less earthly than the chosen race?
Are we more neighbors of the living God
Than they who gathered manna every morn,
Reaping where none had sown, and heard the voice
Of him who met the Highest in the mount,
And brought them tables, graven with His hand?
Yet these must have their idol, brought their gold,
That star-browed Apis might be god again;
Yea, from their ears the women brake the rings

That lent such splendors to the gypsy brown
Of sunburnt cheeks, — what more could woman do
To show her pious zeal? They went astray,
But nature led them as it leads us all.
We too, who mock at Israel's golden calf
And scoff at Egypt's sacred scarabee,
Would have our amulets to clasp and kiss,
And flood with rapturous tears, and bear with us
To be our dear companions in the dust;
Such magic works an image in our souls!

Man is an embryo; see at twenty years
His bones, the columns that uphold his frame
Not yet cemented, shaft and capital,
Mere fragments of the temple incomplete.
At twoscore, threescore, is he then full grown?
Nay, still a child, and as the little maids
Dress and undress their puppets, so he tries
To dress a lifeless creed, as if it lived,
And change its raiment when the world cries shame!
We smile to see our little ones at play
So grave, so thoughtful, with maternal care
Nursing the wisps of rags they call their babes; —
Does He not smile who sees us with the toys
We call by sacred names, and idly feign
To be what we have called them? He is still
The Father of this helpless nursery-brood,
Whose second childhood joins so close its first,
That in the crowding, hurrying years between
We scarce have trained our senses to their task
Before the gathering mist has dimmed our eyes,

And with our hollowed palm we help our ear,
And trace with trembling hand our wrinkled
names,
And then begin to tell our stories o'er,
And see — not hear — the whispering lips that say,
"You know —— ? Your father knew him. — This
is he,
Tottering and leaning on the hireling's arm," —
And so, at length, disrobed of all that clad
The simple life we share with weed and worm,
Go to our cradles, naked as we came.

XII.

LOVE

WHAT if a soul redeemed, a spirit that loved
While yet on earth and was beloved in turn,
And still remembered every look and tone
Of that dear earthly sister who was left
Among the unwise virgins at the gate, —
Itself admitted with the bridegroom's train, —
What if this spirit redeemed, amid the host
Of chanting angels, in some transient lull
Of the eternal anthem, heard the cry
Of its lost darling, whom in evil hour
Some wilder pulse of nature led astray
And left an outcast in a world of fire,
Condemned to be the sport of cruel fiends,
Sleepless, unpitying, masters of the skill
To wring the maddest ecstasies of pain
From worn-out souls that only ask to die, —

Would it not long to leave the bliss of heaven, —
Bearing a little water in its hand
To moisten those poor lips that plead in vain
With Him we call our Father? Or is all
So changed in such as taste celestial joy
They hear unmoved the endless wail of woe;
The daughter in the same dear tones that hushed
Her cradle slumbers; she who once had held
A babe upon her bosom from its voice
Hoarse with its cry of anguish, yet the same?

No! not in ages when the Dreadful Bird
Stamped his huge footprints, and the Fearful Beast
Strode with the flesh about those fossil bones
We build to mimic life with pygmy hands, —
Not in those earliest days when men ran wild
And gashed each other with their knives of stone,
When their low foreheads bulged in ridgy brows
And their flat hands were callous in the palm
With walking in the fashion of their sires,
Grope as they might to find a cruel god
To work their will on such as human wrath
Had wrought its worst to torture, and had left
With rage unsated, white and stark and cold,
Could hate have shaped a demon more malign
Than him the dead men mummied in their creed
And taught their trembling children to adore!
Made in *his* image! Sweet and gracious souls
Dear to my heart by nature's fondest names,
Is not your memory still the precious mould
That lends its form to Him who hears my prayer?
Thus only I behold Him, like to them,

Long-suffering, gentle, ever slow to wrath,
If wrath it be that only wounds to heal,
Ready to meet the wanderer ere he reach
The door he seeks, forgetful of his sin,
Longing to clasp him in a father's arms,
And seal his pardon with a pitying tear!

Four gospels tell their story to mankind,
And none so full of soft, caressing words
That bring the Maid of Bethlehem and her Babe
Before our tear-dimmed eyes, as his who learned
In the meek service of his gracious art
The tones which, like the medicinal balms
That calm the sufferer's anguish, soothe our souls.
Oh that the loving woman, she who sat
So long a listener at her Master's feet,
Had left us Mary's Gospel, — all she heard
Too sweet, too subtle for the ear of man!
Mark how the tender-hearted mothers read
The messages of love between the lines
Of the same page that loads the bitter tongue
Of him who deals in terror as his trade
With threatening words of wrath that scorch like flame!
They tell of angels whispering round the bed
Of the sweet infant smiling in its dream,
Of lambs enfolded in the Shepherd's arms,
Of Him who blessed the children; of the land
Where crystal rivers feed unfading flowers,
Of cities golden-paved with streets of pearl,
Of the white robes the winged creatures wear,
The crowns and harps from whose melodious strings

One long, sweet anthem flows forevermore!
We too had human mothers, even as Thou,
Whom we have learned to worship as remote
From mortal kindred, wast a cradled babe.
The milk of woman filled our branching veins,
She lulled us with her tender nursery-song,
And folded round us her untiring arms,
While the first unremembered twilight year
Shaped us to conscious being; still we feel
Her pulses in our own, — too faintly feel;
Would that the heart of woman warmed our creeds!

Not from the sad-eyed hermit's lonely cell,
Not from the conclave where the holy men
Glare on each other, as with angry eyes
They battle for God's glory and their own,
Till, sick of wordy strife, a show of hands
Fixes the faith of ages yet unborn, —
Ah, not from these the listening soul can hear
The Father's voice that speaks itself divine!
Love must be still our Master; till we learn
What he can teach us of a woman's heart,
We know not His whose love embraces all.

EPILOGUE TO THE BREAKFAST-TABLE SERIES

AUTOCRAT — PROFESSOR — POET

AT A BOOKSTORE

Anno Domini 1972

A CRAZY bookcase, placed before
A low-price dealer's open door;
Therein arrayed in broken rows
A ragged crew of rhyme and prose,
The homeless vagrants, waifs, and strays
Whose low estate this line betrays
(Set forth the lesser birds to lime)
YOUR CHOICE AMONG THESE BOOKS 1 DIME!

Ho! dealer; for its motto's sake
This scarecrow from the shelf I take;
Three starveling volumes bound in one,
Its covers warping in the sun.
Methinks it hath a musty smell,
I like its flavor none too well,
But Yorick's brain was far from dull,
Though Hamlet pah! 'd, and dropped his skull.

Why, here comes rain! The sky grows dark, —
Was that the roll of thunder? Hark!
The shop affords a safe retreat,
A chair extends its welcome seat,
The tradesman has a civil look
(I 've paid, impromptu, for my book),

The clouds portend a sudden shower, —
I 'll read my purchase for an hour.

. . . . . .

What have I rescued from the shelf?
A Boswell, writing out himself!
For though he changes dress and name,
The man beneath is still the same,
Laughing or sad, by fits and starts,
One actor in a dozen parts,
And whatsoe'er the mask may be,
The voice assures us, *This is he.*

I say not this to cry him down;
I find my Shakespeare in his clown,
His rogues the selfsame parent own;
Nay! Satan talks in Milton's tone!
Where'er the ocean inlet strays,
The salt sea wave its source betrays;
Where'er the queen of summer blows,
She tells the zephyr, "I 'm the rose!"

And his is not the playwright's page;
His table does not ape the stage;
What matter if the figures seen
Are only shadows on a screen,
He finds in them his lurking thought,
And on their lips the words he sought,
Like one who sits before the keys
And plays a tune himself to please.

And was he noted in his day?
Read, flattered, honored? Who shall say?

Poor wreck of time the wave has cast
To find a peaceful shore at last,
Once glorying in thy gilded name
And freighted deep with hopes of fame,
Thy leaf is moistened with a tear,
The first for many a long, long year!

For be it more or less of art
That veils the lowliest human heart
Where passion throbs, where friendship glows,
Where pity's tender tribute flows,
Where love has lit its fragrant fire,
And sorrow quenched its vain desire,
For me the altar is divine,
Its flame, its ashes, — all are mine!

And thou, my brother, as I look
And see thee pictured in thy book,
Thy years on every page confessed
In shadows lengthening from the west,
Thy glance that wanders, as it sought
Some freshly opening flower of thought,
Thy hopeful nature, light and free,
I start to find myself in thee!

. . . . . .

Come, vagrant, outcast, wretch forlorn
In leather jerkin stained and torn,
Whose talk has filled my idle hour
And made me half forget the shower,
I 'll do at least as much for you,
Your coat I 'll patch, your gilt renew,
Read you — perhaps — some other time.
Not bad, my bargain! Price one dime!

SONGS OF MANY SEASONS

1862–1874

OPENING THE WINDOW

THUS I lift the sash, so long
Shut against the flight of song;
All too late for vain excuse, —
Lo, my captive rhymes are loose!

Rhymes that, flitting through my brain,
Beat against my window-pane,
Some with gayly colored wings,
Some, alas! with venomed stings.

Shall they bask in sunny rays?
Shall they feed on sugared praise?
Shall they stick with tangled feet
On the critic's poisoned sheet?

Are the outside winds too rough?
Is the world not wide enough?
Go, my winged verse, and try, —
Go, like Uncle Toby's fly!

PROGRAMME

READER — gentle — if so be
Such still live, and live for me,
Will it please you to be told
What my tenscore pages hold?

Here are verses that in spite
Of myself I needs must write,
Like the wine that oozes first
When the unsqueezed grapes have burst.

Here are angry lines, "too hard!"
Says the soldier, battle-scarred.
Could I smile his scars away
I would blot the bitter lay,

Written with a knitted brow,
Read with placid wonder now.
Throbbed such passion in my heart?
Did his wounds once really smart?

Here are varied strains that sing
All the changes life can bring,
Songs when joyous friends have met,
Songs the mourner's tears have wet.

See the banquet's dead bouquet,
Fair and fragrant in its day;
Do they read the selfsame lines, —
He that fasts and he that dines?

Year by year, like milestones placed,
Mark the record Friendship traced.
Prisoned in the walls of time
Life has notched itself in rhyme:

As its seasons slid along,
Every year a notch of song,
From the June of long ago,
When the rose was full in blow,

Till the scarlet sage has come
And the cold chrysanthemum.
Read, but not to praise or blame;
Are not all our hearts the same?

For the rest, they take their chance, —
Some may pay a passing glance;
Others, — well, they served a turn, —
Wherefore written, would you learn?

Not for glory, not for pelf,
Not, be sure, to please myself,
Not for any meaner ends, —
Always "by request of friends."

Here 's the cousin of a king, —
Would I do the civil thing?
Here 's the first-born of a queen;
Here 's a slant-eyed Mandarin.

Would I polish off Japan?
Would I greet this famous man,

Prince or Prelate, Sheik or Shah? —
Figaro çi and Figaro là!

Would I just this once comply? —
So they teased and teased till I
(Be the truth at once confessed)
Wavered — yielded — did my best.

Turn my pages, — never mind
If you like not all you find;
Think not all the grains are gold
Sacramento's sand-banks hold.

Every kernel has its shell,
Every chime its harshest bell,
Every face its weariest look,
Every shelf its emptiest book,

Every field its leanest sheaf,
Every book its dullest leaf,
Every leaf its weakest line, —
Shall it not be so with mine?

Best for worst shall make amends,
Find us, keep us, leave us friends
Till, perchance, we meet again.
Benedicite. — Amen!

October 7, 1874.

IN THE QUIET DAYS

AN OLD-YEAR SONG

As through the forest, disarrayed
By chill November, late I strayed,
A lonely minstrel of the wood
Was singing to the solitude:
I loved thy music, thus I said,
When o'er thy perch the leaves were spread
Sweet was thy song, but sweeter now
Thy carol on the leafless bough.
  Sing, little bird! thy note shall cheer
  The sadness of the dying year.

When violets pranked the turf with blue
And morning filled their cups with dew,
Thy slender voice with rippling trill
The budding April bowers would fill,
Nor passed its joyous tones away
When April rounded into May:
Thy life shall hail no second dawn, —
  Sing, little bird! the spring is gone.

And I remember — well-a-day! —
Thy full-blown summer roundelay,
As when behind a broidered screen
Some holy maiden sings unseen:

With answering notes the woodland rung,
And every tree-top found a tongue.
How deep the shade! the groves how fair!
Sing, little bird! the woods are bare.

The summer's throbbing chant is done
And mute the choral antiphon;
The birds have left the shivering pines
To flit among the trellised vines,
Or fan the air with scented plumes
Amid the love-sick orange-blooms,
And thou art here alone, — alone, —
Sing, little bird! the rest have flown.

The snow has capped yon distant hill,
At morn the running brook was still,
From driven herds the clouds that rise
Are like the smoke of sacrifice;
Erelong the frozen sod shall mock
The ploughshare, changed to stubborn rock,
The brawling streams shall soon be dumb, —
Sing, little bird! the frosts have come.

Fast, fast the lengthening shadows creep,
The songless fowls are half asleep,
The air grows chill, the setting sun
May leave thee ere thy song is done,
The pulse that warms thy breast grow cold,
Thy secret die with thee, untold:
The lingering sunset still is bright, —
Sing, little bird! 't will soon be night.

1874.

DOROTHY Q.

A FAMILY PORTRAIT

I cannot tell the story of Dorothy Q. more simply in prose than I have told it in verse, but I can add something to it.

Dorothy was the daughter of Judge Edmund Quincy, and the niece of Josiah Quincy, junior, the young patriot and orator who died just before the American Revolution, of which he was one of the most eloquent and effective promoters. The son of the latter, Josiah Quincy, the first mayor of Boston bearing that name, lived to a great age, one of the most useful and honored citizens of his time.

The canvas of the painting was so much decayed that it had to be replaced by a new one, in doing which the rapier thrust was of course filled up.

GRANDMOTHER'S mother: her age, I guess,
Thirteen summers, or something less;
Girlish bust, but womanly air;
Smooth, square forehead with uprolled hair;
Lips that lover has never kissed;
Taper fingers and slender wrist;
Hanging sleeves of stiff brocade;
So they painted the little maid.

On her hand a parrot green
Sits unmoving and broods serene.
Hold up the canvas full in view, —
Look! there 's a rent the light shines through,
Dark with a century's fringe of dust, —
That was a Red-Coat's rapier-thrust!
Such is the tale the lady old,
Dorothy's daughter's daughter, told.

Who the painter was none may tell, —
One whose best was not over well;
Hard and dry, it must be confessed,
Flat as a rose that has long been pressed;
Yet in her cheek the hues are bright,
Dainty colors of red and white,
And in her slender shape are seen
Hint and promise of stately mien.

Look not on her with eyes of scorn, —
Dorothy Q. was a lady born!
Ay! since the galloping Normans came,
England's annals have known her name;
And still to the three-hilled rebel town
Dear is that ancient name's renown,
For many a civic wreath they won,
The youthful sire and the gray-haired son.

O Damsel Dorothy! Dorothy Q.!
Strange is the gift that I owe to you;
Such a gift as never a king
Save to daughter or son might bring, —
All my tenure of heart and hand,
All my title to house and land;
Mother and sister and child and wife
And joy and sorrow and death and life!

What if a hundred years ago
Those close-shut lips had answered No,
When forth the tremulous question came
That cost the maiden her Norman name,

And under the folds that look so still
The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill?
Should I be I, or would it be
One tenth another, to nine tenths me?

Soft is the breath of a maiden's YES:
Not the light gossamer stirs with less;
But never a cable that holds so fast
Through all the battles of wave and blast,
And never an echo of speech or song
That lives in the babbling air so long!
There were tones in the voice that whispered then
You may hear to-day in a hundred men.

O lady and lover, how faint and far
Your images hover, — and here we are,
Solid and stirring in flesh and bone, —
Edward's and Dorothy's — all their own, —
A goodly record for Time to show
Of a syllable spoken so long ago! —
Shall I bless you, Dorothy, or forgive
For the tender whisper that bade me live?

It shall be a blessing, my little maid!
I will heal the stab of the Red-Coat's blade,
And freshen the gold of the tarnished frame,
And gild with a rhyme your household name;
So you shall smile on us brave and bright
As first you greeted the morning's light,
And live untroubled by woes and fears
Through a second youth of a hundred years.

1871.

THE ORGAN-BLOWER

DEVOUTEST of my Sunday friends,
The patient Organ-blower bends;
I see his figure sink and rise,
(Forgive me, Heaven, my wandering eyes!)
A moment lost, the next half seen,
His head above the scanty screen,
Still measuring out his deep salaams
Through quavering hymns and panting psalms.

No priest that prays in gilded stole,
To save a rich man's mortgaged soul;
No sister, fresh from holy vows,
So humbly stoops, so meekly bows;
His large obeisance puts to shame
The proudest genuflecting dame,
Whose Easter bonnet low descends
With all the grace devotion lends.

O brother with the supple spine,
How much we owe those bows of thine!
Without thine arm to lend the breeze,
How vain the finger on the keys!
Though all unmatched the player's skill,
Those thousand throats were dumb and still:
Another's art may shape the tone,
The breath that fills it is thine own.

Six days the silent Memnon waits
Behind his temple's folded gates:

But when the seventh day's sunshine falls
Through rainbowed windows on the walls,
He breathes, he sings, he shouts, he fills
The quivering air with rapturous thrills;
The roof resounds, the pillars shake,
And all the slumbering echoes wake!

The Preacher from the Bible-text
With weary words my soul has vexed
(Some stranger, fumbling far astray
To find the lesson for the day);
He tells us truths too plainly true,
And reads the service all askew, —
Why, why the — mischief — can't he look
Beforehand in the service-book?

But thou, with decent mien and face,
Art always ready in thy place;
Thy strenuous blast, whate'er the tune,
As steady as the strong monsoon;
Thy only dread a leathery creak,
Or small residual extra squeak,
To send along the shadowy aisles
A sunlit wave of dimpled smiles.

Not all the preaching, O my friend,
Comes from the church's pulpit end!
Not all that bend the knee and bow
Yield service half so true as thou!
One simple task performed aright,
With slender skill, but all thy might,
Where honest labor does its best,
And leaves the player all the rest.

This many-diapasoned maze,
Through which the breath of being strays,
Whose music makes our earth divine,
Has work for mortal hands like mine.
My duty lies before me. Lo,
The lever there! Take hold and blow!
And He whose hand is on the keys
Will play the tune as He shall please.

1872.

AT THE PANTOMIME

THE house was crammed from roof to floor,
Heads piled on heads at every door;
Half dead with August's seething heat
I crowded on and found my seat,
My patience slightly out of joint,
My temper short of boiling-point,
Not quite at *Hate mankind as such*,
Nor yet at *Love them overmuch*.

Amidst the throng the pageant drew
Were gathered Hebrews not a few,
Black-bearded, swarthy, — at their side
Dark, jewelled women, orient-eyed:
If scarce a Christian hopes for grace
Who crowds one in his narrow place,
What will the savage victim do
Whose ribs are kneaded by a Jew?

Next on my left a breathing form
Wedged up against me, close and warm;

The beak that crowned the bistred face
Betrayed the mould of Abraham's race, —
That coal-black hair, that smoke-brown hue, —
Ah, cursèd, unbelieving Jew!
I started, shuddering, to the right,
And squeezed — a second Israelite!

Then woke the evil brood of rage
That slumber, tongueless, in their cage;
I stabbed in turn with silent oaths
The hook-nosed kite of carrion clothes,
The snaky usurer, him that crawls
And cheats beneath the golden balls,
Moses and Levi, all the horde,
Spawn of the race that slew its Lord.

Up came their murderous deeds of old,
The grisly story Chaucer told,
And many an ugly tale beside
Of children caught and crucified;
I heard the ducat-sweating thieves
Beneath the Ghetto's slouching eaves,
And, thrust beyond the tented green,
The lepers cry, "Unclean! Unclean!"

The show went on, but, ill at ease,
My sullen eye it could not please,
In vain my conscience whispered, "Shame!
Who but their Maker is to blame?"
I thought of Judas and his bribe,
And steeled my soul against their tribe:
My neighbors stirred; I looked again
Full on the younger of the twain.

A fresh young cheek whose olive hue
The mantling blood shows faintly through;
Locks dark as midnight, that divide
And shade the neck on either side;
Soft, gentle, loving eyes that gleam
Clear as a starlit mountain stream; —
So looked that other child of Shem,
The Maiden's Boy of Bethlehem!

And thou couldst scorn the peerless blood
That flows unmingled from the Flood, —
Thy scutcheon spotted with the stains
Of Norman thieves and pirate Danes!
The New World's foundling, in thy pride
Scowl on the Hebrew at thy side,
And lo! the very semblance there
The Lord of Glory deigned to wear!

I see that radiant image rise,
The flowing hair, the pitying eyes,
The faintly crimsoned cheek that shows
The blush of Sharon's opening rose, —
Thy hands would clasp his hallowed feet
Whose brethren soil thy Christian seat,
Thy lips would press his garment's hem
That curl in wrathful scorn for them!

A sudden mist, a watery screen,
Dropped like a veil before the scene;
The shadow floated from my soul,
And to my lips a whisper stole, —
"Thy prophets caught the Spirit's flame,

From thee the Son of Mary came,
With thee the Father deigned to dwell, —
Peace be upon thee, Israel!"

18—. Rewritten 1874.

AFTER THE FIRE

WHILE far along the eastern sky
I saw the flags of Havoc fly,
As if his forces would assault
The sovereign of the starry vault
And hurl Him back the burning rain
That seared the cities of the plain,
I read as on a crimson page
The words of Israel's sceptred sage: —

For riches make them wings, and they
Do as an eagle fly away.

O vision of that sleepless night,
What hue shall paint the mocking light
That burned and stained the orient skies
Where peaceful morning loves to rise,
As if the sun had lost his way
And dawned to make a second day, —
Above how red with fiery glow,
How dark to those it woke below!

On roof and wall, on dome and spire,
Flashed the false jewels of the fire;
Girt with her belt of glittering panes,
And crowned with starry-gleaming vanes,

Our northern queen in glory shone
With new-born splendors not her own,
And stood, transfigured in our eyes,
A victim decked for sacrifice!

The cloud still hovers overhead,
And still the midnight sky is red;
As the lost wanderer strays alone
To seek the place he called his own,
His devious footprints sadly tell
How changed the pathways known so well;
The scene, how new! The tale, how old
Ere yet the ashes have grown cold!

Again I read the words that came
Writ in the rubric of the flame:
Howe'er we trust to mortal things,
Each hath its pair of folded wings;
Though long their terrors rest unspread
Their fatal plumes are never shed;
At last, at last, they stretch in flight,
And blot the day and blast the night!

Hope, only Hope, of all that clings
Around us, never spreads her wings;
Love, though he break his earthly chain,
Still whispers he will come again;
But Faith that soars to seek the sky
Shall teach our half-fledged souls to fly,
And find, beyond the smoke and flame,
The cloudless azure whence they came!

1872.

A BALLAD OF THE BOSTON TEA-PARTY

Read at a meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

No! never such a draught was poured
  Since Hebe served with nectar
The bright Olympians and their Lord,
  Her over-kind protector, —
Since Father Noah squeezed the grape
  And took to such behaving
As would have shamed our grandsire ape
  Before the days of shaving, —
No! ne'er was mingled such a draught
  In palace, hall, or arbor,
As freemen brewed and tyrants quaffed
  That night in Boston Harbor!
It kept King George so long awake
  His brain at last got addled,
It made the nerves of Britain shake,
  With sevenscore millions saddled;
Before that bitter cup was drained,
  Amid the roar of cannon,
The Western war-cloud's crimson stained
  The Thames, the Clyde, the Shannon;
Full many a six-foot grenadier
  The flattened grass had measured,
And many a mother many a year
  Her tearful memories treasured;
Fast spread the tempest's darkening pall,
  The mighty realms were troubled,
The storm broke loose, but first of all
  The Boston teapot bubbled!

An evening party,— only that,
No formal invitation,
No gold-laced coat, no stiff cravat,
No feast in contemplation,
No silk-robed dames, no fiddling band,
No flowers, no songs, no dancing, —
A tribe of red men, axe in hand, —
Behold the guests advancing!
How fast the stragglers join the throng,
From stall and workshop gathered!
The lively barber skips along
And leaves a chin half-lathered;
The smith has flung his hammer down, —
The horseshoe still is glowing;
The truant tapster at the Crown
Has left a beer-cask flowing;
The cooper's boys have dropped the adze,
And trot behind their master;
Up run the tarry ship-yard lads, —
The crowd is hurrying faster, —
Out from the Millpond's purlieus gush
The streams of white-faced millers,
And down their slippery alleys rush
The lusty young Fort-Hillers;
The ropewalk lends its 'prentice crew, —
The tories seize the omen:
"Ay, boys, you 'll soon have work to do
For England's rebel foemen,
'King Hancock,' Adams, and their gang,
That fire the mob with treason, —
When these we shoot and those we hang
The town will come to reason."

On — on to where the tea-ships ride!
  And now their ranks are forming, —
A rush, and up the Dartmouth's side
  The Mohawk band is swarming!
See the fierce natives! What a glimpse
  Of paint and fur and feather,
As all at once the full-grown imps
  Light on the deck together!
A scarf the pigtail's secret keeps,
  A blanket hides the breeches, —
And out the cursèd cargo leaps,
  And overboard it pitches!

O woman, at the evening board
  So gracious, sweet, and purring,
So happy while the tea is poured,
  So blest while spoons are stirring,
What martyr can compare with thee,
  The mother, wife, or daughter,
That night, instead of best Bohea,
  Condemned to milk and water!

Ah, little dreams the quiet dame
  Who plies with rock and spindle
The patient flax, how great a flame
  Yon little spark shall kindle!
The lurid morning shall reveal
  A fire no king can smother
Where British flint and Boston steel
  Have clashed against each other!
Old charters shrivel in its track,
  His Worship's bench has crumbled,

It climbs and clasps the union-jack,
  Its blazoned pomp is humbled,
The flags go down on land and sea
  Like corn before the reapers;
So burned the fire that brewed the tea
  That Boston served her keepers!

The waves that wrought a century's wreck
  Have rolled o'er whig and tory;
The Mohawks on the Dartmouth's deck
  Still live in song and story;
The waters in the rebel bay
  Have kept the tea-leaf savor;
Our old North-Enders in their spray
  Still taste a Hyson flavor;
And Freedom's teacup still o'erflows
  With ever fresh libations,
To cheat of slumber all her foes
  And cheer the wakening nations!

1874.

NEARING THE SNOW-LINE

SLOW toiling upward from the misty vale,
  I leave the bright enamelled zones below;
  No more for me their beauteous bloom shall glow,
Their lingering sweetness load the morning gale;
Few are the slender flowerets, scentless, pale,
  That on their ice-clad stems all trembling blow
  Along the margin of unmelting snow;
Yet with unsaddened voice thy verge I hail,
  White realm of peace above the flowering line;

Welcome thy frozen domes, thy rocky spires!
O'er thee undimmed the moon-girt planets shine,
On thy majestic altars fade the fires
That filled the air with smoke of vain desires,
And all the unclouded blue of heaven is thine!

1870.

IN WAR TIME

TO CANAAN

A PURITAN WAR-SONG

This poem, published anonymously in the Boston *Evening Transcript*, was claimed by several persons, three, if I remember correctly, whose names I have or have had, but never thought it worth while to publish.

WHERE are you going, soldiers,
With banner, gun, and sword?
We 're marching South to Canaan
To battle for the Lord!
What Captain leads your armies
Along the rebel coasts?
The Mighty One of Israel,
His name is Lord of Hosts!
To Canaan, to Canaan
The Lord has led us forth,
To blow before the heathen walls
The trumpets of the North!

What flag is this you carry
Along the sea and shore?
The same our grandsires lifted up, —
The same our fathers bore!
In many a battle's tempest
It shed the crimson rain, —

What God has woven in his loom
  Let no man rend in twain!
    To Canaan, to Canaan
    The Lord has led us forth,
    To plant upon the rebel towers
    The banners of the North!

What troop is this that follows,
  All armed with picks and spades?
These are the swarthy bondsmen, —
  The iron-skin brigades!
They 'll pile up Freedom's breastwork,
  They 'll scoop out rebels' graves;
Who then will be their owner
  And march them off for slaves?
    To Canaan, to Canaan
    The Lord has led us forth,
    To strike upon the captive's chain
    The hammers of the North!

What song is this you 're singing?
  The same that Israel sung
When Moses led the mighty choir,
  And Miriam's timbrel rung!
To Canaan! To Canaan!
  The priests and maidens cried:
To Canaan! To Canaan!
  The people's voice replied.
    To Canaan, to Canaan
    The Lord has led us forth,
    To thunder through its adder dens
    The anthems of the North!

When Canaan's hosts are scattered,
And all her walls lie flat,
What follows next in order?
The Lord will see to that!
We 'll break the tyrant's sceptre, —
We 'll build the people's throne, —
When half the world is Freedom's,
Then all the world 's our own!
To Canaan, to Canaan
The Lord has led us forth,
To sweep the rebel threshing-floors,
A whirlwind from the North!

August 12, 1862.

"THUS SAITH THE LORD, I OFFER THEE THREE THINGS."

In poisonous dens, where traitors hide
Like bats that fear the day,
While all the land our charters claim
Is sweating blood and breathing flame,
Dead to their country's woe and shame,
The recreants whisper Stay!

In peaceful homes, where patriot fires
On Love's own altars glow,
The mother hides her trembling fear,
The wife, the sister, checks a tear,
To breathe the parting word of cheer,
Soldier of Freedom, Go!

In halls where Luxury lies at ease,
And Mammon keeps his state,
Where flatterers fawn and menials crouch,
The dreamer, startled from his couch,
Wrings a few counters from his pouch,
And murmurs faintly WAIT!

In weary camps, on trampled plains
That ring with fife and drum,
The battling host, whose harness gleams
Along the crimson-flowing streams,
Calls, like a warning voice in dreams,
We want you, Brother! COME!

Choose ye whose bidding ye will do, —
To go, to wait, to stay!
Sons of the Freedom-loving town,
Heirs of the Fathers' old renown,
The servile yoke, the civic crown,
Await your choice TO-DAY!

The stake is laid! O gallant youth
With yet unsilvered brow,
If Heaven should lose and Hell should win,
On whom shall lie the mortal sin,
That cries aloud, *It might have been?*
God calls you — answer NOW.

1862.

NEVER OR NOW

AN APPEAL

LISTEN, young heroes! your country is calling!
Time strikes the hour for the brave and the true!
Now, while the foremost are fighting and falling,
Fill up the ranks that have opened for you!

You whom the fathers made free and defended,
Stain not the scroll that emblazons their fame!
You whose fair heritage spotless descended,
Leave not your children a birthright of shame!

Stay not for questions while Freedom stands gasping!
Wait not till Honor lies wrapped in his pall!
Brief the lips' meeting be, swift the hands' clasping, —
"Off for the wars!" is enough for them all!

Break from the arms that would fondly caress you!
Hark! 't is the bugle-blast, sabres are drawn!
Mothers shall pray for you, fathers shall bless you,
Maidens shall weep for you when you are gone!

Never or now! cries the blood of a nation,
Poured on the turf where the red rose should bloom;
Now is the day and the hour of salvation, —
Never or now! peals the trumpet of doom!

Never or now! roars the hoarse-throated cannon
Through the black canopy blotting the skies;
Never or now! flaps the shell-blasted pennon
O'er the deep ooze where the Cumberland lies!

From the foul dens where our brothers are dying,
Aliens and foes in the land of their birth, —
From the rank swamps where our martyrs are lying
Pleading in vain for a handful of earth, —

From the hot plains where they perish outnumbered,
Furrowed and ridged by the battle-field's plough,
Comes the loud summons; too long you have slumbered,
Hear the last Angel-trump, — Never or Now!

1862.

ONE COUNTRY

ONE country! Treason's writhing asp
Struck madly at her girdle's clasp,
And Hatred wrenched with might and main
To rend its welded links in twain,
While Mammon hugged his golden calf
Content to take one broken half,
While thankless churls stood idly by
And heard unmoved a nation's cry!

One country! "Nay," — the tyrant crew
Shrieked from their dens, — "it shall be two!
Ill bodes to us this monstrous birth,

That scowls on all the thrones of earth,
Too broad yon starry cluster shines,
Too proudly tower the New-World pines,
Tear down the 'banner of the free,'
And cleave their land from sea to sea!"

One country still, though foe and "friend"
Our seamless empire strove to rend;
Safe! safe! though all the fiends of hell
Join the red murderers' battle-yell!
What though the lifted sabres gleam,
The cannons frown by shore and stream, —
The sabres clash, the cannons thrill,
In wild accord, One country still!

One country! in her stress and strain
We heard the breaking of a chain!
Look where the conquering Nation swings
Her iron flail, — its shivered rings!
Forged by the rebels' crimson hand,
That bolt of wrath shall scourge the land
Till Peace proclaims on sea and shore
One Country now and evermore!

1865.

GOD SAVE THE FLAG!

WASHED in the blood of the brave and the blooming,
Snatched from the altars of insolent foes,
Burning with star-fires, but never consuming,
Flash its broad ribbons of lily and rose.

Vainly the prophets of Baal would rend it,
Vainly his worshippers pray for its fall;
Thousands have died for it, millions defend it,
Emblem of justice and mercy to all:

Justice that reddens the sky with her terrors,
Mercy that comes with her white-handed train,
Soothing all passions, redeeming all errors,
Sheathing the sabre and breaking the chain.

Borne on the deluge of old usurpations,
Drifted our Ark o'er the desolate seas,
Bearing the rainbow of hope to the nations,
Torn from the storm-cloud and flung to the breeze!

God bless the Flag and its loyal defenders,
While its broad folds o'er the battle-field wave,
Till the dim star-wreath rekindle its splendors,
Washed from its stains in the blood of the brave!

1865.

HYMN

AFTER THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

GIVER of all that crowns our days,
With grateful hearts we sing thy praise;
Through deep and desert led by Thee,
Our promised land at last we see.

Ruler of Nations, judge our cause!
If we have kept thy holy laws,

The sons of Belial curse in vain
The day that rends the captive's chain.

Thou God of vengeance! Israel's Lord!
Break in their grasp the shield and sword,
And make thy righteous judgments known
Till all thy foes are overthrown!

Then, Father, lay thy healing hand
In mercy on our stricken land;
Lead all its wanderers to the fold,
And be their Shepherd as of old.

So shall one Nation's song ascend
To Thee, our Ruler, Father, Friend,
While Heaven's wide arch resounds again
With Peace on earth, good-will to men!

1865.

HYMN

FOR THE FAIR AT CHICAGO

O GOD! in danger's darkest hour,
In battle's deadliest field,
Thy name has been our Nation's tower,
Thy truth her help and shield.

Our lips should fill the air with praise,
Nor pay the debt we owe,
So high above the songs we raise
The floods of mercy flow.

Yet Thou wilt hear the prayer we speak,
The song of praise we sing, —
Thy children, who thine altar seek
Their grateful gifts to bring.

Thine altar is the sufferer's bed,
The home of woe and pain,
The soldier's turfy pillow, red
With battle's crimson rain.

No smoke of burning stains the air,
No incense-clouds arise;
Thy peaceful servants, Lord, prepare
A bloodless sacrifice.

Lo! for our wounded brothers' need,
We bear the wine and oil;
For us they faint, for us they bleed,
For them our gracious toil!

O Father, bless the gifts we bring!
Cause Thou thy face to shine,
Till every nation owns her King,
And all the earth is thine.

1865.

UNDER THE WASHINGTON ELM, CAMBRIDGE

APRIL 27, 1861

EIGHTY years have passed, and more,
Since under the brave old tree
Our fathers gathered in arms, and swore
They would follow the sign their banners bore,
And fight till the land was free.

Half of their work was done,
Half is left to do, —
Cambridge, and Concord, and Lexington!
When the battle is fought and won,
What shall be told of you?

Hark! — 't is the south-wind moans, —
Who are the martyrs down?
Ah, the marrow was true in your children's bones
That sprinkled with blood the cursèd stones
Of the murder-haunted town!

What if the storm-clouds blow?
What if the green leaves fall?
Better the crashing tempest's throe
Than the army of worms that gnawed below;
Trample them one and all!

Then, when the battle is won,
And the land from traitors free,

Our children shall tell of the strife begun
When Liberty's second April sun
Was bright on our brave old tree!

FREEDOM, OUR QUEEN

LAND where the banners wave last in the sun,
Blazoned with star-clusters, many in one,
Floating o'er prairie and mountain and sea;
Hark! 't is the voice of thy children to thee!

Here at thine altar our vows we renew
Still in thy cause to be loyal and true, —
True to thy flag on the field and the wave,
Living to honor it, dying to save!

Mother of heroes! if perfidy's blight
Fall on a star in thy garland of light,
Sound but one bugle-blast! Lo! at the sign
Armies all panoplied wheel into line!

Hope of the world! thou hast broken its chains, —
Wear thy bright arms while a tyrant remains,
Stand for the right till the nations shall own
Freedom their sovereign, with Law for her throne!

Freedom! sweet Freedom! our voices resound,
Queen by God's blessing, unsceptred, uncrowned!
Freedom, sweet Freedom, our pulses repeat,
Warm with her life-blood, as long as they beat!

Fold the broad banner-stripes over her breast, —
Crown her with star-jewels Queen of the West!
Earth for her heritage, God for her friend,
She shall reign over us, world without end!

ARMY HYMN

"OLD HUNDRED"

O LORD of Hosts! Almighty King!
Behold the sacrifice we bring!
To every arm thy strength impart,
Thy spirit shed through every heart!

Wake in our breasts the living fires,
The holy faith that warmed our sires;
Thy hand hath made our Nation free;
To die for her is serving Thee.

Be Thou a pillared flame to show
The midnight snare, the silent foe;
And when the battle thunders loud,
Still guide us in its moving cloud.

God of all Nations! Sovereign Lord!
In thy dread name we draw the sword,
We lift the starry flag on high
That fills with light our stormy sky.

From treason's rent, from murder's stain,
Guard Thou its folds till Peace shall reign, —
Till fort and field, till shore and sea,
Join our loud anthem, PRAISE TO THEE!

PARTING HYMN

"DUNDEE"

FATHER of Mercies, Heavenly Friend,
We seek thy gracious throne;
To Thee our faltering prayers ascend,
Our fainting hearts are known!

From blasts that chill, from suns that smite,
From every plague that harms;
In camp and march, in siege and fight,
Protect our men-at-arms!

Though from our darkened lives they take
What makes our life most dear,
We yield them for their country's sake
With no relenting tear.

Our blood their flowing veins will shed,
Their wounds our breasts will share;
Oh, save us from the woes we dread,
Or grant us strength to bear!

Let each unhallowed cause that brings
The stern destroyer cease,
Thy flaming angel fold his wings,
And seraphs whisper Peace!

Thine are the sceptre and the sword,
Stretch forth thy mighty hand, —
Reign Thou our kingless nation's Lord,
Rule Thou our throneless land!

THE FLOWER OF LIBERTY

WHAT flower is this that greets the morn,
Its hues from Heaven so freshly born?
With burning star and flaming band
It kindles all the sunset land:
Oh tell us what its name may be, —
Is this the Flower of Liberty?
It is the banner of the free,
The starry Flower of Liberty!

In savage Nature's far abode
Its tender seed our fathers sowed;
The storm-winds rocked its swelling bud,
Its opening leaves were streaked with blood,
Till lo! earth's tyrants shook to see
The full-blown Flower of Liberty!
Then hail the banner of the free,
The starry Flower of Liberty!

Behold its streaming rays unite,
One mingling flood of braided light, —
The red that fires the Southern rose,
With spotless white from Northern snows,
And, spangled o'er its azure, see
The sister Stars of Liberty!
Then hail the banner of the free,
The starry Flower of Liberty!

The blades of heroes fence it round,
Where'er it springs is holy ground;

From tower and dome its glories spread;
It waves where lonely sentries tread;
It makes the land as ocean free,
And plants an empire on the sea!
Then hail the banner of the free,
The starry Flower of Liberty!

Thy sacred leaves, fair Freedom's flower,
Shall ever float on dome and tower,
To all their heavenly colors true,
In blackening frost or crimson dew, —
And God love us as we love thee,
Thrice holy Flower of Liberty!
Then hail the banner of the free,
The starry FLOWER OF LIBERTY!

THE SWEET LITTLE MAN

DEDICATED TO THE STAY-AT-HOME RANGERS

NOW, while our soldiers are fighting our battles,
Each at his post to do all that he can,
Down among rebels and contraband chattels,
What are you doing, my sweet little man?

All the brave boys under canvas are sleeping,
All of them pressing to march with the van,
Far from the home where their sweethearts are weeping;
What are you waiting for, sweet little man?

You with the terrible warlike mustaches,
Fit for a colonel or chief of a clan,
You with the waist made for sword-belts and sashes,
Where are your shoulder-straps, sweet little man?

Bring him the buttonless garment of woman!
Cover his face lest it freckle and tan;
Muster the Apron-String Guards on the Common,
That is the corps for the sweet little man!

Give him for escort a file of young misses,
Each of them armed with a deadly rattan;
They shall defend him from laughter and hisses,
Aimed by low boys at the sweet little man.

All the fair maidens about him shall cluster,
Pluck the white feathers from bonnet and fan,
Make him a plume like a turkey-wing duster, —
That is the crest for the sweet little man!

Oh, but the Apron-String Guards are the fellows!
Drilling each day since our troubles began, —
"Handle your walking-sticks!" "Shoulder umbrellas!"
That is the style for the sweet little man!

Have we a nation to save? In the first place
Saving ourselves is the sensible plan, —
Surely the spot where there 's shooting 's the worst place
Where I can stand, says the sweet little man.

Catch me confiding my person with strangers!
  Think how the cowardly Bull-Runners ran!
In the brigade of the Stay-at-Home Rangers
  Marches my corps, says the sweet little man.

Such was the stuff of the Malakoff-takers,
  Such were the soldiers that scaled the Redan;
Truculent housemaids and bloodthirsty Quakers,
  Brave not the wrath of the sweet little man!

Yield him the sidewalk, ye nursery maidens!
  Sauve qui peut! Bridget, and right about!
    Ann; —
Fierce as a shark in a school of menhadens,
  See him advancing, the sweet little man!

When the red flails of the battle-field's threshers
  Beat out the continent's wheat from its bran,
While the wind scatters the chaffy seceshers,
  What will become of our sweet little man?

When the brown soldiers come back from the borders,
  How will he look while his features they scan?
How will he feel when he gets marching orders,
  Signed by his lady love? sweet little man!

Fear not for him, though the rebels expect him, —
  Life is too precious to shorten its span;
Woman her broomstick shall raise to protect him,
  Will she not fight for the sweet little man?

Now then, nine cheers for the Stay-at-Home Ranger!
Blow the great fish-horn and beat the big pan!
First in the field that is farthest from danger,
Take your white-feather plume, sweet little man!

UNION AND LIBERTY

FLAG of the heroes who left us their glory,
Borne through their battle-fields' thunder and flame,
Blazoned in song and illumined in story,
Wave o'er us all who inherit their fame!
Up with our banner bright,
Sprinkled with starry light,
Spread its fair emblems from mountain to shore,
While through the sounding sky
Loud rings the Nation's cry, —
UNION AND LIBERTY! ONE EVERMORE!

Light of our firmament, guide of our Nation,
Pride of her children, and honored afar,
Let the wide beams of thy full constellation
Scatter each cloud that would darken a star!
Up with our banner bright, etc.

Empire unsceptred! what foe shall assail thee,
Bearing the standard of Liberty's van?
Think not the God of thy fathers shall fail thee,
Striving with men for the birthright of man!
Up with our banner bright, etc.

Yet if, by madness and treachery blighted,
Dawns the dark hour when the sword thou must draw,
Then with the arms of thy millions united,
Smite the bold traitors to Freedom and Law!
Up with our banner bright, etc.

Lord of the Universe! shield us and guide us,
Trusting Thee always, through shadow and sun!
Thou hast united us, who shall divide us?
Keep us, oh keep us the MANY IN ONE!
Up with our banner bright,
Sprinkled with starry light,
Spread its fair emblems from mountain to shore,
While through the sounding sky
Loud rings the Nation's cry, —
UNION AND LIBERTY! ONE EVERMORE!

SONGS OF WELCOME AND FAREWELL

AMERICA TO RUSSIA

AUGUST 5, 1866

Read by Hon. G. V. Fox at a dinner given to the Mission from the United States, St. Petersburg.

THOUGH watery deserts hold apart
The worlds of East and West,
Still beats the selfsame human heart
In each proud Nation's breast.

Our floating turret tempts the main
And dares the howling blast
To clasp more close the golden chain
That long has bound them fast.

In vain the gales of ocean sweep,
In vain the billows roar
That chafe the wild and stormy steep
Of storied Elsinore.

She comes! She comes! her banners dip
In Neva's flashing tide,
With greetings on her cannon's lip,
The storm-god's iron bride!

Peace garlands with the olive-bough
Her thunder-bearing tower,
And plants before her cleaving prow
The sea-foam's milk-white flower.

No prairies heaped their garnered store
To fill her sunless hold,
Not rich Nevada's gleaming ore
Its hidden caves infold,

But lightly as the sea-bird swings
She floats the depths above,
A breath of flame to lend her wings,
Her freight a people's love!

When darkness hid the starry skies
In war's long winter night,
One ray still cheered our straining eyes,
The far-off Northern light!

And now the friendly rays return
From lights that glow afar,
Those clustered lamps of Heaven that burn
Around the Western Star.

A nation's love in tears and smiles
We bear across the sea,
O Neva of the banded isles,
We moor our hearts in thee!

WELCOME TO THE GRAND DUKE ALEXIS

MUSIC HALL, DECEMBER 6, 1871

Sung to the Russian national air by the children of the public schools.

SHADOWED so long by the storm-cloud of danger,
Thou whom the prayers of an empire defend,
Welcome, thrice welcome! but not as a stranger,
Come to the nation that calls thee its friend!

Bleak are our shores with the blasts of December,
Fettered and chill is the rivulet's flow;
Throbbing and warm are the hearts that remember
Who was our friend when the world was our foe.

Look on the lips that are smiling to greet thee,
See the fresh flowers that a people has strewn:
Count them thy sisters and brothers that meet thee;
Guest of the Nation, her heart is thine own!

Fires of the North, in eternal communion,
Blend your broad flashes with evening's bright star!
God bless the Empire that loves the Great Union;
Strength to her people! Long life to the Czar!

AT THE BANQUET TO THE GRAND DUKE ALEXIS

DECEMBER 9, 1871

ONE word to the guest we have gathered to greet!
The echoes are longing that word to repeat, —
It springs to the lips that are waiting to part,
For its syllables spell themselves first in the heart.

Its accents may vary, its sound may be strange,
But it bears a kind message that nothing can change;
The dwellers by Neva its meaning can tell,
For the smile, its interpreter, shows it full well.

That word! How it gladdened the Pilgrim of yore,
As he stood in the snow on the desolate shore!
When the shout of the sagamore startled his ear
In the phrase of the Saxon, 't was music to hear!

Ah, little could Samoset offer our sire, —
The cabin, the corn-cake, the seat by the fire;
He had nothing to give, — the poor lord of the land, —
But he gave him a WELCOME, — his heart in his hand!

The tribe of the sachem has melted away,
But the word that he spoke is remembered to-day,

And the page that is red with the record of shame
The tear-drops have whitened round Samoset's name.

The word that he spoke to the Pilgrim of old
May sound like a tale that has often been told;
But the welcome we speak is as fresh as the dew, —
As the kiss of a lover, that always is new!

Ay, Guest of the Nation! each roof is thine own
Through all the broad continent's star-bannered zone;
From the shore where the curtain of morn is up-rolled,
To the billows that flow through the gateway of gold.

The snow-crested mountains are calling aloud;
Nevada to Ural speaks out of the cloud,
And Shasta shouts forth, from his throne in the sky,
To the storm-splintered summits, the peaks of Altai!

You must leave him, they say, till the summer is green!
Both shores are his home, though the waves roll between;
And then we 'll return him, with thanks for the same,
As fresh and as smiling and tall as he came.

But ours is the region of arctic delight;
We can show him auroras and pole-stars by night;
There 's a Muscovy sting in the ice-tempered air,
And our firesides are warm and our maidens are fair.

The flowers are full-blown in the garlanded hall, —
They will bloom round his footsteps wherever they fall;
For the splendors of youth and the sunshine they bring
Make the roses believe 't is the summons of Spring.

One word of our language he needs must know well,
But another remains that is harder to spell;
We shall speak it so ill, if he wishes to learn
How we utter *Farewell*, he will have to return!

AT THE BANQUET TO THE CHINESE EMBASSY

AUGUST 21, 1868

Brothers, whom we may not reach
Through the veil of alien speech,
Welcome! welcome! eyes can tell
What the lips in vain would spell, —
Words that hearts can understand,
Brothers from the Flowery Land!

We, the evening's latest born,
Hail the children of the morn!
We, the new creation's birth,
Greet the lords of ancient earth,
From their storied walls and towers
Wandering to these tents of ours!

Land of wonders, fair Cathay,
Who long hast shunned the staring day,
Hid in mists of poet's dreams
By thy blue and yellow streams, —
Let us thy shadowed form behold, —
Teach us as thou didst of old.

Knowledge dwells with length of days;
Wisdom walks in ancient ways;
Thine the compass that could guide
A nation o'er the stormy tide,
Scourged by passions, doubts, and fears,
Safe through thrice a thousand years!

Looking from thy turrets gray
Thou hast seen the world's decay, —
Egypt drowning in her sands, —
Athens rent by robbers' hands, —
Rome, the wild barbarian's prey,
Like a storm-cloud swept away:

Looking from thy turrets gray
Still we see thee. Where are they?
And lo! a new-born nation waits,
Sitting at the golden gates

That glitter by the sunset sea, —
Waits with outspread arms for thee!

Open wide, ye gates of gold,
To the Dragon's banner-fold!
Builders of the mighty wall,
Bid your mountain barriers fall!
So may the girdle of the sun
Bind the East and West in one,

Till Mount Shasta's breezes fan
The snowy peaks of Ta Sieue-Shan, —
Till Erie blends its waters blue
With the waves of Tung-Ting-Hu, —
Till deep Missouri lends its flow
To swell the rushing Hoang-Ho!

AT THE BANQUET TO THE JAPANESE EMBASSY

AUGUST 2, 1872

We welcome you, Lords of the Land of the Sun!
The voice of the many sounds feebly through one;
Ah! would 't were a voice of more musical tone,
But the dog-star is here, and the song-birds have flown.

And what shall I sing that can cheat you of smiles,
Ye heralds of peace from the Orient isles?
If only the Jubilee — Why did you wait?
You are welcome, but oh! you 're a little too late!

We have greeted our brothers of Ireland and
France,
Round the fiddle of Strauss we have joined in the
dance,
We have lagered Herr Saro, that fine-looking man,
And glorified Godfrey, whose name it is Dan.

What a pity! we 've missed it and you 've missed
it too,
We had a day ready and waiting for you;
We 'd have shown you — provided, of course, you
had come —
You 'd have heard — no, you would n't, because it
was dumb.

And then the great organ! The chorus's shout!
Like the mixture teetotalers call "Cold with-
out" —
A mingling of elements, strong, but not sweet;
And the drum, just referred to, that "could n't be
beat."

The shrines of our pilgrims are not like your own,
Where white Fusiyama lifts proudly its cone,
(The snow-mantled mountain we see on the fan
That cools our hot cheeks with a breeze from
Japan.)

But ours the wide temple where worship is free
As the wind of the prairie, the wave of the sea;
You may build your own altar wherever you will,
For the roof of that temple is over you still.

One dome overarches the star-bannered shore;
You may enter the Pope's or the Puritan's door,
Or pass with the Buddhist his gateway of bronze,
For a priest is but Man, be he bishop or bonze.

And the lesson we teach with the sword and the pen
Is to all of God's children, "We also are men!
If you wrong us we smart, if you prick us we bleed,
If you love us, no quarrel with color or creed!"

You 'll find us a well-meaning, free-spoken crowd,
Good-natured enough, but a little too loud, —
To be sure, there is always a bit of a row
When we choose our Tycoon, and especially now.

You 'll take it all calmly, — we want you to see
What a peaceable fight such a contest can be,
And of one thing be certain, however it ends,
You will find that our voters have chosen your friends.

If the horse that stands saddled is first in the race,
You will greet your old friend with the weed in his face;
And if the white hat and the White House agree,
You 'll find H. G. really as loving as he.

But oh, what a pity — once more I must say —
That we could not have joined in a "Japanese day"!
Such greeting we give you to-night as we can;
Long life to our brothers and friends of Japan!

The Lord of the mountain looks down from his crest
As the banner of morning unfurls in the West;
The Eagle was always the friend of the Sun;
You are welcome! — The song of the cage-bird is done.

BRYANT'S SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY

NOVEMBER 3, 1864

O EVEN-HANDED Nature! we confess
This life that men so honor, love, and bless
Has filled thine olden measure. Not the less

We count the precious seasons that remain;
Strike not the level of the golden grain,
But heap it high with years, that earth may gain

What heaven can lose, — for heaven is rich in song:
Do not all poets, dying, still prolong
Their broken chants amid the seraph throng,

Where, blind no more, Ionia's bard is seen,
And England's heavenly minstrel sits between
The Mantuan and the wan-cheeked Florentine?

This was the first sweet singer in the cage
Of our close-woven life. A new-born age
Claims in his vesper song its heritage:

Spare us, oh spare us long our heart's desire!
Moloch, who calls our children through the fire,
Leaves us the gentle master of the lyre.

We count not on the dial of the sun
The hours, the minutes, that his sands have run;
Rather, as on those flowers that one by one

From earliest dawn their ordered bloom display
Till evening's planet with her guiding ray
Leads in the blind old mother of the day,

We reckon by his songs, each song a flower,
The long, long daylight, numbering hour by hour,
Each breathing sweetness like a bridal bower.

His morning glory shall we e'er forget?
His noontide's full-blown lily coronet?
His evening primrose has not opened yet;

Nay, even if creeping Time should hide the skies
In midnight from his century-laden eyes,
Darkened like his who sang of Paradise,

Would not some hidden song-bud open bright
As the resplendent cactus of the night
That floods the gloom with fragrance and with light?

How can we praise the verse whose music flows
With solemn cadence and majestic close,
Pure as the dew that filters through the rose?

How shall we thank him that in evil days
He faltered never, — nor for blame, nor praise,
Nor hire, nor party, shamed his earlier lays?

But as his boyhood was of manliest hue,
So to his youth his manly years were true,
All dyed in royal purple through and through!

He for whose touch the lyre of Heaven is strung
Needs not the flattering toil of mortal tongue:
Let not the singer grieve to die unsung!

Marbles forget their message to mankind:
In his own verse the poet still we find,
In his own page his memory lives enshrined,

As in their amber sweets the smothered bees, —
As the fair cedar, fallen before the breeze,
Lies self-embalmed amidst the mouldering trees.

Poets, like youngest children, never grow
Out of their mother's fondness. Nature so
Holds their soft hands, and will not let them go,

Till at the last they track with even feet
Her rhythmic footsteps, and their pulses beat
Twinned with her pulses, and their lips repeat

The secrets she has told them, as their own:
Thus is the inmost soul of Nature known,
And the rapt minstrel shares her awful throne!

O lover of her mountains and her woods,
Her bridal chamber's leafy solitudes,
Where Love himself with tremulous step intrudes,

Her snows fall harmless on thy sacred fire:
Far be the day that claims thy sounding lyre
To join the music of the angel choir!

Yet, since life's amplest measure must be filled,
Since throbbing hearts must be forever stilled,
And all must fade that evening sunsets gild,

Grant, Father, ere he close the mortal eyes
That see a Nation's reeking sacrifice,
Its smoke may vanish from these blackened skies!

Then, when his summons comes, since come it must,
And, looking heavenward with unfaltering trust,
He wraps his drapery round him for the dust,

His last fond glance will show him o'er his head
The Northern fires beyond the zenith spread
In lambent glory, blue and white and red, —

The Southern cross without its bleeding load,
The milky way of peace all freshly strowed,
And every white-throned star fixed in its lost abode!

A FAREWELL TO AGASSIZ

How the mountains talked together,
Looking down upon the weather,
When they heard our friend had planned his
Little trip among the Andes!
How they 'll bare their snowy scalps
To the climber of the Alps
When the cry goes through their passes,
"Here comes the great Agassiz!"
"Yes, I 'm tall," says Chimborazo,
"But I wait for him to say so, —
That 's the only thing that lacks, — he
Must see me, Cotopaxi!"
"Ay! ay!" the fire-peak thunders,
"And he must view my wonders!
I 'm but a lonely crater
Till I have him for spectator!"
The mountain hearts are yearning,
The lava-torches burning,
The rivers bend to meet him,
The forests bow to greet him,
It thrills the spinal column
Of fossil fishes solemn,
And glaciers crawl the faster
To the feet of their old master!
Heaven keep him well and hearty,
Both him and all his party!
From the sun that broils and smites,
From the centipede that bites,
From the hail-storm and the thunder,

From the vampire and the condor,
From the gust upon the river,
From the sudden earthquake shiver,
From the trip of mule or donkey,
From the midnight howling monkey,
From the stroke of knife or dagger,
From the puma and the jaguar,
From the horrid boa-constrictor
That has scared us in the pictur',
From the Indians of the Pampas
Who would dine upon their grampas,
From every beast and vermin
That to think of sets us squirmin',
From every snake that tries on
The traveller his p'ison,
From every pest of Natur',
Likewise the alligator,
And from two things left behind him, —
(Be sure they 'll try to find him,)
The tax-bill and assessor, —
Heaven keep the great Professor!
May he find, with his apostles,
That the land is full of fossils,
That the waters swarm with fishes
Shaped according to his wishes,
That every pool is fertile
In fancy kinds of turtle,
New birds around him singing,
New insects, never stinging,
With a million novel data
About the articulata,
And facts that strip off all husks
From the history of mollusks.

And when, with loud Te Deum,
He returns to his Museum,
May he find the monstrous reptile
That so long the land has kept ill
By Grant and Sherman throttled,
And by Father Abraham bottled,
(All specked and streaked and mottled
With the scars of murderous battles,
Where he clashed the iron rattles
That gods and men he shook at,)
For all the world to look at!

God bless the great Professor!
And Madam, too, God bless her!
Bless him and all his band,
On the sea and on the land,
Bless them head and heart and hand,
Till their glorious raid is o'er,
And they touch our ransomed shore!
Then the welcome of a nation,
With its shout of exultation,
Shall awake the dumb creation,
And the shapes of buried æons
Join the living creatures' pæans,
Till the fossil echoes roar;
While the mighty megalosaurus
Leads the palæozoic chorus, —
God bless the great Professor,
And the land his proud possessor, —
Bless them now and evermore!

1865.

AT A DINNER TO ADMIRAL FARRAGUT

JULY 6, 1865

Now, smiling friends and shipmates all,
  Since half our battle 's won,
A broadside for our Admiral!
  Load every crystal gun!
Stand ready till I give the word, —
  You won't have time to tire, —
And when that glorious name is heard,
  Then hip! hurrah! and fire!

Bow foremost sinks the rebel craft, —
  Our eyes not sadly turn
And see the pirates huddling aft
  To drop their raft astern;
Soon o'er the sea-worm's destined prey
  The lifted wave shall close, —
So perish from the face of day
  All Freedom's banded foes!

But ah! what splendors fire the sky!
  What glories greet the morn!
The storm-tost banner streams on high,
  Its heavenly hues new-born!
Its red fresh dyed in heroes' blood,
  Its peaceful white more pure,
To float unstained o'er field and flood
  While earth and seas endure!

All shapes before the driving blast
  Must glide from mortal view;

Black roll the billows of the past
  Behind the present's blue,
Fast, fast, are lessening in the light
  The names of high renown, —
Van Tromp's proud besom fades from sight,
  And Nelson 's half hull down!

Scarce one tall frigate walks the sea
  Or skirts the safer shores
Of all that bore to victory
  Our stout old commodores;
Hull, Bainbridge, Porter, — where are they?
  The waves their answer roll,
"Still bright in memory's sunset ray, —
  God rest each gallant soul!"

A brighter name must dim their light
  With more than noontide ray,
The Sea-King of the "River Fight,"
  The Conqueror of the Bay, —
Now then the broadside! cheer on cheer
  To greet him safe on shore!
Health, peace, and many a bloodless year
  To fight his battles o'er!

AT A DINNER TO GENERAL GRANT

JULY 31, 1865

WHEN treason first began the strife
  That crimsoned sea and shore,
The Nation poured her hoarded life
  On Freedom's threshing-floor;

From field and prairie, east and west,
From coast and hill and plain,
The sheaves of ripening manhood pressed
Thick as the bearded grain.

Rich was the harvest; souls as true
As ever battle tried;
But fiercer still the conflict grew,
The floor of death more wide;
Ah, who forgets that dreadful day
Whose blot of grief and shame
Four bitter years scarce wash away
In seas of blood and flame?

Vain, vain the Nation's lofty boasts, —
Vain all her sacrifice!
"Give me a man to lead my hosts,
O God in heaven!" she cries.
While Battle whirls his crushing flail,
And plies his winnowing fan, —
Thick flies the chaff on every gale, —
She cannot find her man!

Bravely they fought who failed to win, —
Our leaders battle-scarred, —
Fighting the hosts of hell and sin,
But devils die always hard!
Blame not the broken tools of God
That helped our sorest needs;
Through paths that martyr feet have trod
The conqueror's steps He leads.

But now the heavens grow black with doubt,
The ravens fill the sky,
"Friends" plot within, foes storm without,
Hark, — that despairing cry,
"Where is the heart, the hand, the brain
To dare, to do, to plan?"
The bleeding Nation shrieks in vain, —
She has not found her man!

A little echo stirs the air, —
Some tale, whate'er it be,
Of rebels routed in their lair
Along the Tennessee.
The little echo spreads and grows,
And soon the trump of Fame
Has taught the Nation's friends and foes
The "man on horseback" 's name.

So well his warlike wooing sped,
No fortress might resist
His billets-doux of lisping lead,
The bayonets in his fist, —
With kisses from his cannons' mouth
He made his passion known
Till Vicksburg, vestal of the South,
Unbound her virgin zone.

And still where'er his banners led
He conquered as he came,
The trembling hosts of treason fled
Before his breath of flame,
And Fame's still gathering echoes grew
Till high o'er Richmond's towers

The starry fold of Freedom flew,
And all the land was ours.

Welcome from fields where valor fought
To feasts where pleasure waits;
A Nation gives you smiles unbought
At all her opening gates!
Forgive us when we press your hand, —
Your war-worn features scan, —
God sent you to a bleeding land;
Our Nation found its man!

TO H. W. LONGFELLOW

BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR EUROPE, MAY 27, 1868

OUR Poet, who has taught the Western breeze
To waft his songs before him o'er the seas,
Will find them wheresoe'er his wanderings reach
Borne on the spreading tide of English speech
Twin with the rhythmic waves that kiss the farthest beach.

Where shall the singing bird a stranger be
That finds a nest for him in every tree?
How shall he travel who can never go
Where his own voice the echoes do not know,
Where his own garden flowers no longer learn to grow?

Ah! gentlest soul! how gracious, how benign
Breathes through our troubled life that voice of thine,

Filled with a sweetness born of happier spheres,
That wins and warms, that kindles, softens, cheers,
That calms the wildest woe and stays the bitterest tears!

Forgive the simple words that sound like praise;
The mist before me dims my gilded phrase;
Our speech at best is half alive and cold,
And save that tenderer moments make us bold
Our whitening lips would close, their truest truth untold.

We who behold our autumn sun below
The Scorpion's sign, against the Archer's bow,
Know well what parting means of friend from friend;
After the snows no freshening dews descend,
And what the frost has marred, the sunshine will not mend.

So we all count the months, the weeks, the days,
That keep thee from us in unwonted ways,
Grudging to alien hearths our widowed time;
And one has shaped a breath in artless rhyme
That sighs, "We track thee still through each remotest clime."

What wishes, longings, blessings, prayers shall be
The more than golden freight that floats with thee!

And know, whatever welcome thou shalt find, —
Thou who hast won the hearts of half mankind, —
The proudest, fondest love thou leavest still behind!

TO CHRISTIAN GOTTFRIED EHRENBERG

FOR HIS "JUBILÆUM" AT BERLIN, NOVEMBER 5, 1868

This poem was written at the suggestion of Mr. George Bancroft, the historian.

THOU who hast taught the teachers of mankind
How from the least of things the mightiest grow,
What marvel jealous Nature made thee blind,
Lest man should learn what angels long to know?
Thou in the flinty rock, the river's flow,
In the thick-moted sunbeam's sifted light
Hast trained thy downward-pointed tube to show
Worlds within worlds unveiled to mortal sight,
Even as the patient watchers of the night, —
The cyclope gleaners of the fruitful skies, —
Show the wide misty way where heaven is white
All paved with suns that daze our wondering eyes.

Far o'er the stormy deep an empire lies,
Beyond the storied islands of the blest,
That waits to see the lingering day-star rise;
The forest-cinctured Eden of the West;
Whose queen, fair Freedom, twines her iron crest
With leaves from every wreath that mortals wear,
But loves the sober garland ever best
That science lends the sage's silvered hair; —

Science, who makes life's heritage more fair,
  Forging for every lock its mastering key,
Filling with life and hope the stagnant air,
  Pouring the light of Heaven o'er land and sea!
From her unsceptred realm we come to thee,
  Bearing our slender tribute in our hands;
Deem it not worthless, humble though it be,
  Set by the larger gifts of older lands:
The smallest fibres weave the strongest bands, —
  In narrowest tubes the sovereign nerves are spun, —
A little cord along the deep sea-sands
  Makes the live thought of severed nations one:
Thy fame has journeyed westering with the sun,
  Prairies and lone sierras know thy name
And the long day of service nobly done
  That crowns thy darkened evening with its flame!

One with the grateful world, we own thy claim, —
  Nay, rather claim our right to join the throng
Who come with varied tongues, but hearts the same,
  To hail thy festal morn with smiles and song;
Ah, happy they to whom the joys belong
  Of peaceful triumphs that can never die
From History's record, — not of gilded wrong,
  But golden truths that, while the world goes by
With all its empty pageant, blazoned high
  Around the Master's name forever shine!
So shines thy name illumined in the sky, —
  Such joys, such triumphs, such remembrance thine!

A TOAST TO WILKIE COLLINS

FEBRUARY 16, 1874

THE painter's and the poet's fame
Shed their twinned lustre round his name,
To gild our story-teller's art,
Where each in turn must play his part.

What scenes from Wilkie's pencil sprung,
The minstrel saw but left unsung!
What shapes the pen of Collins drew,
No painter clad in living hue!

But on our artist's shadowy screen
A stranger miracle is seen
Than priest unveils or pilgrim seeks, —
The poem breathes, the picture speaks!

And so his double name comes true,
They christened better than they knew,
And Art proclaims him twice her son, —
Painter and poet, both in one!

MEMORIAL VERSES

FOR THE SERVICES IN MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

CITY OF BOSTON, JUNE 1, 1865

CHORAL: "LUTHER'S JUDGMENT HYMN."

O THOU of soul and sense and breath
The ever-present Giver,
Unto thy mighty Angel, Death,
All flesh thou dost deliver;
What most we cherish we resign,
For life and death alike are thine,
Who reignest Lord forever!

Our hearts lie buried in the dust
With him so true and tender,
The patriot's stay, the people's trust,
The shield of the offender;
Yet every murmuring voice is still,
As, bowing to thy sovereign will,
Our best-loved we surrender.

Dear Lord, with pitying eye behold
This martyr generation,
Which thou, through trials manifold,
Art showing thy salvation!

Oh let the blood by murder spilt
Wash out thy stricken children's guilt
And sanctify our nation!

Be thou thy orphaned Israel's friend,
Forsake thy people never,
In One our broken Many blend,
That none again may sever!
Hear us, O Father, while we raise
With trembling lips our song of praise,
And bless thy name forever!

FOR THE COMMEMORATION SERVICES

CAMBRIDGE, JULY 21, 1865

FOUR summers coined their golden light in leaves,
Four wasteful autumns flung them to the gale,
Four winters wore the shroud the tempest weaves,
The fourth wan April weeps o'er hill and vale;

And still the war-clouds scowl on sea and land,
With the red gleams of battle staining through,
When lo! as parted by an angel's hand,
They open, and the heavens again are blue!

Which is the dream, the present or the past?
The night of anguish or the joyous morn?
The long, long years with horrors overcast,
Or the sweet promise of the day new-born?

Tell us, O father, as thine arms infold
  Thy belted first-born in their fast embrace,
Murmuring the prayer the patriarch breathed of old, —
  "Now let me die, for I have seen thy face!"

Tell us, O mother, — nay, thou canst not speak,
  But thy fond eyes shall answer, brimmed with joy, —
Press thy mute lips against the sunbrowned cheek,
  Is this a phantom, — thy returning boy?

Tell us, O maiden, — ah, what canst thou tell
  That Nature's record is not first to teach, —
The open volume all can read so well,
  With its twin rose-hued pages full of speech?

And ye who mourn your dead, — how sternly true
  The crushing hour that wrenched their lives away,
Shadowed with sorrow's midnight veil for you,
  For them the dawning of immortal day!

Dream-like these years of conflict, not a dream!
  Death, ruin, ashes tell the awful tale,
Read by the flaming war-track's lurid gleam:
  No dream, but truth that turns the nations pale!

For on the pillar raised by martyr hands
  Burns the rekindled beacon of the right,
Sowing its seeds of fire o'er all the lands, —
  Thrones look a century older in its light!

Rome had her triumphs; round the conqueror's car
The ensigns waved, the brazen clarions blew,
And o'er the reeking spoils of bandit war
With outspread wings the cruel eagles flew;

Arms, treasures, captives, kings in clanking chains
Urged on by trampling cohorts bronzed and scarred,
And wild-eyed wonders snared on Libyan plains,
Lion and ostrich and camelopard.

Vain all that prætors clutched, that consuls brought
When Rome's returning legions crowned their lord;
Less than the least brave deed these hands have wrought,
We clasp, unclinching from the bloody sword.

Theirs was the mighty work that seers foretold;
They know not half their glorious toil has won,
For this is Heaven's same battle, — joined of old
When Athens fought for us at Marathon!

Behold a vision none hath understood!
The breaking of the Apocalyptic seal;
Twice rings the summons. — Hail and fire and blood!
Then the third angel blows his trumpet-peal.

Loud wail the dwellers on the myrtled coasts,
The green savannas swell the maddened cry,

And with a yell from all the demon hosts
Falls the great star called Wormwood from the sky!

Bitter it mingles with the poisoned flow
Of the warm rivers winding to the shore,
Thousands must drink the waves of death and woe,
But the star Wormwood stains the heavens no more!

Peace smiles at last; the Nation calls her sons
To sheathe the sword; her battle-flag she furls,
Speaks in glad thunders from unshotted guns,
No terror shrouded in the smoke-wreath's curls.

O ye that fought for Freedom, living, dead,
One sacred host of God's anointed Queen,
For every holy drop your veins have shed
We breathe a welcome to our bowers of green!

Welcome, ye living! from the foeman's gripe
Your country's banner it was yours to wrest, —
Ah, many a forehead shows the banner-stripe,
And stars, once crimson, hallow many a breast.

And ye, pale heroes, who from glory's bed
Mark when your old battalions form in line,
Move in their marching ranks with noiseless tread,
And shape unheard the evening countersign,

Come with your comrades, the returning brave;
Shoulder to shoulder they await you here;

These lent the life their martyr-brothers gave, —
Living and dead alike forever dear!

EDWARD EVERETT

"OUR FIRST CITIZEN"

Read at the meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society, January 30, 1865.

WINTER'S cold drift lies glistening o'er his breast;
For him no spring shall bid the leaf unfold:
What Love could speak, by sudden grief oppressed,
What swiftly summoned Memory tell, is told.

Even as the bells, in one consenting chime,
Filled with their sweet vibrations all the air,
So joined all voices, in that mournful time,
His genius, wisdom, virtues, to declare.

What place is left for words of measured praise,
Till calm-eyed History, with her iron pen,
Grooves in the unchanging rock the final phrase
That shapes his image in the souls of men?

Yet while the echoes still repeat his name,
While countless tongues his full-orbed life rehearse,
Love, by his beating pulses taught, will claim
The breath of song, the tuneful throb of verse, —

Verse that, in ever-changing ebb and flow,
Moves, like the laboring heart, with rush and rest,
Or swings in solemn cadence, sad and slow,
Like the tired heaving of a grief-worn breast.

This was a mind so rounded, so complete,
No partial gift of Nature in excess,
That, like a single stream where many meet,
Each separate talent counted something less.

A little hillock, if it lonely stand,
Holds o'er the fields an undisputed reign;
While the broad summit of the table-land
Seems with its belt of clouds a level plain.

Servant of all his powers, that faithful slave,
Unsleeping Memory, strengthening with his toils,
To every ruder task his shoulder gave,
And loaded every day with golden spoils.

Order, the law of Heaven, was throned supreme
O'er action, instinct, impulse, feeling, thought;
True as the dial's shadow to the beam,
Each hour was equal to the charge it brought.

Too large his compass for the nicer skill
That weighs the world of science grain by grain;
All realms of knowledge owned the mastering will
That claimed the franchise of its whole domain.

Earth, air, sea, sky, the elemental fire,
Art, history, song, — what meanings lie in each
Found in his cunning hand a stringless lyre,
And poured their mingling music through his speech.

Thence flowed those anthems of our festal days,
Whose ravishing division held apart
The lips of listening throngs in sweet amaze,
Moved in all breasts the selfsame human heart.

Subdued his accents, as of one who tries
To press some care, some haunting sadness down;
His smile half shadow; and to stranger eyes
The kingly forehead wore an iron crown.

He was not armed to wrestle with the storm,
To fight for homely truth with vulgar power;
Grace looked from every feature, shaped his form, —
The rose of Academe, — the perfect flower!

Such was the stately scholar whom we knew
In those ill days of soul-enslaving calm,
Before the blast of Northern vengeance blew
Her snow-wreathed pine against the Southern palm.

Ah, God forgive us! did we hold too cheap
The heart we might have known, but would not see,
And look to find the nation's friend asleep
Through the dread hour of her Gethsemane?

That wrong is past; we gave him up to Death
With all a hero's honors round his name;
As martyrs coin their blood, he coined his breath,
And dimmed the scholar's in the patriot's fame.

So shall we blazon on the shaft we raise, —
Telling our grief, our pride, to unborn years, —
"He who had lived the mark of all men's praise
Died with the tribute of a Nation's tears."

SHAKESPEARE

TERCENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

APRIL 23, 1864

"WHO claims our Shakespeare from that realm unknown,
Beyond the storm-vexed islands of the deep,
Where Genoa's roving mariner was blown?
Her twofold Saint's-day let our England keep;
Shall warring aliens share her holy task?"
The Old World echoes ask.

O land of Shakespeare! ours with all thy past,
Till these last years that make the sea so wide,
Think not the jar of battle's trumpet-blast
Has dulled our aching sense to joyous pride
In every noble word thy sons bequeathed
The air our fathers breathed!

War-wasted, haggard, panting from the strife,
We turn to other days and far-off lands,

Live o'er in dreams the Poet's faded life,
Come with fresh lilies in our fevered hands
To wreathe his bust, and scatter purple flowers, —
Not his the need, but ours!

We call those poets who are first to mark
Through earth's dull mist the coming of the dawn, —
Who see in twilight's gloom the first pale spark,
While others only note that day is gone;
For him the Lord of light the curtain rent
That veils the firmament.

The greatest for its greatness is half known,
Stretching beyond our narrow quadrant-lines, —
As in that world of Nature all outgrown
Where Calaveras lifts his awful pines,
And cast from Mariposa's mountain-wall
Nevada's cataracts fall.

Yet heaven's remotest orb is partly ours,
Throbbing its radiance like a beating heart;
In the wide compass of angelic powers
The instinct of the blindworm has its part;
So in God's kingliest creature we behold
The flower our buds infold.

With no vain praise we mock the stone-carved name
Stamped once on dust that moved with pulse and breath,
As thinking to enlarge that amplest fame
Whose undimmed glories gild the night of death:

We praise not star or sun; in these we see
Thee, Father, only thee!

Thy gifts are beauty, wisdom, power, and love:
We read, we reverence on this human soul, —
Earth's clearest mirror of the light above, —
Plain as the record on thy prophet's scroll,
When o'er his page the effluent splendors poured,
Thine own "Thus saith the Lord!"

This player was a prophet from on high,
Thine own elected. Statesman, poet, sage,
For him thy sovereign pleasure passed them by;
Sidney's fair youth, and Raleigh's ripened age,
Spenser's chaste soul, and his imperial mind
Who taught and shamed mankind.

Therefore we bid our hearts' Te Deum rise,
Nor fear to make thy worship less divine,
And hear the shouted choral shake the skies,
Counting all glory, power, and wisdom thine;
For thy great gift thy greater name adore,
And praise thee evermore!

In this dread hour of Nature's utmost need,
Thanks for these unstained drops of freshening dew!
Oh, while our martyrs fall, our heroes bleed,
Keep us to every sweet remembrance true,
Till from this blood-red sunset springs new-born
Our Nation's second morn!

IN MEMORY OF JOHN AND ROBERT WARE

Read at the annnal meeting of the Massachusetts Medical Society, May 25, 1864.

No mystic charm, no mortal art,
  Can bid our loved companions stay;
The bands that clasp them to our heart
Snap in death's frost and fall apart;
  Like shadows fading with the day,
    They pass away.

The young are stricken in their pride,
  The old, long tottering, faint and fall;
Master and scholar, side by side,
Through the dark portals silent glide,
  That open in life's mouldering wall
    And close on all.

Our friend's, our teacher's task was done,
  When Mercy called him from on high;
A little cloud had dimmed the sun,
The saddening hours had just begun,
  And darker days were drawing nigh:
    'T was time to die.

A whiter soul, a fairer mind,
  A life with purer course and aim,
A gentler eye, a voice more kind,
We may not look on earth to find.
  The love that lingers o'er his name
    Is more than fame.

These blood-red summers ripen fast;
The sons are older than the sires;
Ere yet the tree to earth is cast,
The sapling falls before the blast;
Life's ashes keep their covered fires, —
Its flame expires.

Struck by the noiseless, viewless foe,
Whose deadlier breath than shot or shell
Has laid the best and bravest low,
His boy, all bright in morning's glow,
That high-souled youth he loved so well,
Untimely fell.

Yet still he wore his placid smile,
And, trustful in the cheering creed
That strives all sorrow to beguile,
Walked calmly on his way awhile:
Ah, breast that leans on breaking reed
Must ever bleed!

So they both left us, sire and son,
With opening leaf, with laden bough:
The youth whose race was just begun,
The wearied man whose course was run,
Its record written on his brow,
Are brothers now.

Brothers! — The music of the sound
Breathes softly through my closing strain;
The floor we tread is holy ground,
Those gentle spirits hovering round,

While our fair circle joins again
Its broken chain.

1864.

HUMBOLDT'S BIRTHDAY

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION, SEPTEMBER 14, 1869

BONAPARTE, AUGUST 15, 1769. — HUMBOLDT, SEPTEMBER 14, 1769

ERE yet the warning chimes of midnight sound,
Set back the flaming index of the year,
Track the swift-shifting seasons in their round
Through fivescore circles of the swinging sphere!

Lo, in yon islet of the midland sea
That cleaves the storm-cloud with its snowy crest,
The embryo-heir of Empires yet to be,
A month-old babe upon his mother's breast.

Those little hands that soon shall grow so strong
In their rude grasp great thrones shall rock and fall,
Press her soft bosom, while a nursery song
Holds the world's master in its slender thrall.

Look! a new crescent bends its silver bow;
A new-lit star has fired the eastern sky;
Hark! by the river where the lindens blow
A waiting household hears an infant's cry.

This, too, a conqueror! His the vast domain,
Wider than widest sceptre-shadowed lands;

Earth and the weltering kingdom of the main
Laid their broad charters in his royal hands.

His was no taper lit in cloistered cage,
Its glimmer borrowed from the grove or porch;
He read the record of the planet's page
By Etna's glare and Cotopaxi's torch.

He heard the voices of the pathless woods;
On the salt steppes he saw the starlight shine;
He scaled the mountain's windy solitudes,
And trod the galleries of the breathless mine.

For him no fingering of the love-strung lyre,
No problem vague, by torturing schoolmen vexed;
He fed no broken altar's dying fire,
Nor skulked and scowled behind a Rabbi's text.

For God's new truth he claimed the kingly robe
That priestly shoulders counted all their own,
Unrolled the gospel of the storied globe
And led young Science to her empty throne.

While the round planet on its axle spins
One fruitful year shall boast its double birth,
And show the cradles of its mighty twins,
Master and Servant of the sons of earth.

Which wears the garland that shall never fade,
Sweet with fair memories that can never die?
Ask not the marbles where their bones are laid,
But bow thine ear to hear thy brothers' cry: —

"Tear up the despot's laurels by the root,
Like mandrakes, shrieking as they quit the soil!
Feed us no more upon the blood-red fruit
That sucks its crimson from the heart of Toil!

"We claim the food that fixed our mortal fate, —
Bend to our reach the long-forbidden tree!
The angel frowned at Eden's eastern gate, —
Its western portal is forever free!

"Bring the white blossoms of the waning year,
Heap with full hands the peaceful conqueror's shrine
Whose bloodless triumphs cost no sufferer's tear!
Hero of knowledge, be our tribute thine!"

POEM

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE HALLECK MONUMENT, JULY 8, 1869

Say not the Poet dies!
Though in the dust he lies,
He cannot forfeit his melodious breath,
Unsphered by envious death!
Life drops the voiceless myriads from its roll;
Their fate he cannot share,
Who, in the enchanted air
Sweet with the lingering strains that Echo stole,
Has left his dearer self, the music of his soul!

We o'er his turf may raise
Our notes of feeble praise,
And carve with pious care for after eyes
The stone with "Here he lies;"
He for himself has built a nobler shrine,
Whose walls of stately rhyme
Roll back the tides of time,
While o'er their gates the gleaming tablets shine
That wear his name inwrought with many a golden line!

Call not our Poet dead,
Though on his turf we tread!
Green is the wreath their brows so long have worn, —
The minstrels of the morn,
Who, while the Orient burned with new-born flame,
Caught that celestial fire
And struck a Nation's lyre!
These taught the western winds the poet's name;
Theirs the first opening buds, the maiden flowers of fame!

Count not our Poet dead!
The stars shall watch his bed,
The rose of June its fragrant life renew
His blushing mound to strew,
And all the tuneful throats of summer swell
With trills as crystal-clear
As when he wooed the ear

Of the young muse that haunts each wooded dell,
With songs of that "rough land" he loved so long
and well!

He sleeps; he cannot die!
As evening's long-drawn sigh,
Lifting the rose-leaves on his peaceful mound,
Spreads all their sweets around,
So, laden with his song, the breezes blow
From where the rustling sedge
Frets our rude ocean's edge
To the smooth sea beyond the peaks of snow.
His soul the air enshrines and leaves but dust below!

HYMN

FOR THE CELEBRATION AT THE LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE OF HARVARD MEMORIAL HALL, CAMBRIDGE, OCTOBER 6, 1870

Not with the anguish of hearts that are breaking
Come we as mourners to weep for our dead;
Grief in our breasts has grown weary of aching,
Green is the turf where our tears we have shed.

While o'er their marbles the mosses are creeping,
Stealing each name and its legend away,
Give their proud story to Memory's keeping,
Shrined in the temple we hallow to-day.

Hushed are their battle-fields, ended their marches,
Deaf are their ears to the drum-beat of morn, —

Rise from the sod, ye fair columns and arches!
Tell their bright deeds to the ages unborn!

Emblem and legend may fade from the portal,
Keystone may crumble and pillar may fall;
They were the builders whose work is immortal,
Crowned with the dome that is over us all!

HYMN

FOR THE DEDICATION OF MEMORIAL HALL AT CAMBRIDGE, JUNE 23, 1874

WHERE, girt around by savage foes,
Our nurturing Mother's shelter rose,
Behold, the lofty temple stands,
Reared by her children's grateful hands!

Firm are the pillars that defy
The volleyed thunders of the sky;
Sweet are the summer wreaths that twine
With bud and flower our martyrs' shrine.

The hues their tattered colors bore
Fall mingling on the sunlit floor
Till evening spreads her spangled pall,
And wraps in shade the storied hall.

Firm were their hearts in danger's hour,
Sweet was their manhood's morning flower,
Their hopes with rainbow hues were bright, —
How swiftly winged the sudden night!

O Mother! on thy marble page
Thy children read, from age to age,
The mighty word that upward leads
Through noble thought to nobler deeds.

TRUTH, heaven-born TRUTH, their fearless guide,
Thy saints have lived, thy heroes died;
Our love has reared their earthly shrine,
Their glory be forever thine!

HYMN

AT THE FUNERAL SERVICES OF CHARLES SUMNER,
APRIL 29, 1874

SUNG BY MALE VOICES TO A NATIONAL AIR OF HOLLAND

ONCE more, ye sacred towers,
Your solemn dirges sound;
Strew, loving hands, the April flowers,
Once more to deck his mound.
A nation mourns its dead,
Its sorrowing voices one,
As Israel's monarch bowed his head
And cried, "My son! My son!"

Why mourn for him? — For him
The welcome angel came
Ere yet his eye with age was dim
Or bent his stately frame;
His weapon still was bright,
His shield was lifted high

To slay the wrong, to save the right, —
What happier hour to die?

Thou orderest all things well;
Thy servant's work was done;
He lived to hear Oppression's knell,
The shouts for Freedom won.
Hark! from the opening skies
The anthem's echoing swell, —
"O mourning Land, lift up thine eyes!
God reigneth. All is well!"

RHYMES OF AN HOUR

ADDRESS

FOR THE OPENING OF THE FIFTH AVENUE THEATRE, NEW YORK, DECEMBER 3, 1873

HANG out our banners on the stately tower!
It dawns at last — the long-expected hour!
The steep is climbed, the star-lit summit won,
The builder's task, the artist's labor done;
Before the finished work the herald stands,
And asks the verdict of your lips and hands!

Shall rosy daybreak make us all forget
The golden sun that yester-evening set?
Fair was the fabric doomed to pass away
Ere the last headaches born of New Year's Day;
With blasting breath the fierce destroyer came
And wrapped the victim in his robes of flame;
The pictured sky with redder morning blushed,
With scorching streams the naiad's fountain gushed,
With kindling mountains glowed the funeral pyre,
Forests ablaze and rivers all on fire, —
The scenes dissolved, the shrivelling curtain fell, —
Art spread her wings and sighed a long farewell!

Mourn o'er the Player's melancholy plight, —
Falstaff in tears, Othello deadly white, —
Poor Romeo reckoning what his doublet cost,
And Juliet whimpering for her dresses lost, —
Their wardrobes burned, their salaries all undrawn,
Their cues cut short, their occupation gone!

"Lie there in dust," the red-winged demon cried,
"Wreck of the lordly city's hope and pride!"
Silent they stand, and stare with vacant gaze,
While o'er the embers leaps the fitful blaze;
When, lo! a hand, before the startled train,
Writes in the ashes, "It shall rise again, —
Rise and confront its elemental foes!"
The word was spoken, and the walls arose,
And ere the seasons round their brief career
The new-born temple waits the unborn year.

Ours was the toil of many a weary day
Your smiles, your plaudits, only can repay;
We are the monarchs of the painted scenes,
You, you alone the real Kings and Queens!
Lords of the little kingdom where we meet,
We lay our gilded sceptres at your feet,
Place in your grasp our portal's silvered keys
With one brief utterance: *We have tried to please.*
Tell us, ye sovereigns of the new domain,
Are you content — or have we toiled in vain?

With no irreverent glances look around
The realm you rule, for this is haunted ground!
Here stalks the Sorcerer, here the Fairy trips,

Here limps the Witch with malice-working lips,
The Graces here their snowy arms entwine,
Here dwell the fairest sisters of the Nine, —
She who, with jocund voice and twinkling eye,
Laughs at the brood of follies as they fly;
She of the dagger and the deadly bowl,
Whose charming horrors thrill the trembling soul;
She who, a truant from celestial spheres,
In mortal semblance now and then appears,
Stealing the fairest earthly shape she can —
Sontag or Nilsson, Lind or Malibran;
With these the spangled houri of the dance, —
What shaft so dangerous as her melting glance,
As poised in air she spurns the earth below,
And points aloft her heavenly-minded toe!

What were our life, with all its rents and seams,
Stripped of its purple robes, our waking dreams?
The poet's song, the bright romancer's page,
The tinselled shows that cheat us on the stage
Lead all our fancies captive at their will;
Three years or threescore, we are children still.
The little listener on his father's knee,
With wandering Sindbad ploughs the stormy sea,
With Gotham's sages hears the billows roll
(Illustrious trio of the venturous bowl,
Too early shipwrecked, for they died too soon
To see their offspring launch the great balloon);
Tracks the dark brigand to his mountain lair,
Slays the grim giant, saves the lady fair,
Fights all his country's battles o'er again
From Bunker's blazing height to Lundy's Lane;

Floats with the mighty captains as they sailed,
Before whose flag the flaming red-cross paled,
And claims the oft-told story of the scars
Scarce yet grown white, that saved the stripes and stars!

Children of later growth, we love the PLAY,
We love its heroes, be they grave or gay,
From squeaking, peppery, devil-defying Punch
To roaring Richard with his camel-hunch;
Adore its heroines, those immortal dames,
Time's only rivals, whom he never tames,
Whose youth, unchanging, lives while thrones decay
(Age spares the Pyramids — and Dejazet);
The saucy-aproned, razor-tongued soubrette,
The blond-haired beauty with the eyes of jet,
The gorgeous Beings whom the viewless wires
Lift to the skies in strontian-crimsoned fires,
And all the wealth of splendor that awaits
The throng that enters those Elysian gates.

See where the hurrying crowd impatient pours,
With noise of trampling feet and flapping doors,
Streams to the numbered seat each pasteboard fits
And smooths its caudal plumage as it sits;
Waits while the slow musicians saunter in,
Till the bald leader taps his violin;
Till the old overture we know so well,
Zampa or Magic Flute or William Tell,
Has done its worst — then hark! the tinkling bell!
The crash is o'er — the crinkling curtain furled,
And lo! the glories of that brighter world!

Behold the offspring of the Thespian cart,
This full-grown temple of the magic art,
Where all the conjurers of illusion meet,
And please us all the more, the more they cheat.
These are the wizards and the witches too
Who win their honest bread by cheating you
With cheeks that drown in artificial tears
And lying skull-caps white with seventy years,
Sweet-tempered matrons changed to scolding Kates,
Maids mild as moonbeams crazed with murderous hates,
Kind, simple souls that stab and slash and slay
And stick at nothing, if it 's in the play!

Would all the world told half as harmless lies!
Would all its real fools were half as wise
As he who blinks through dull Dundreary's eyes!
Would all the unhanged bandits of the age
Were like the peaceful ruffians of the stage!
Would all the cankers wasting town and state,
The mob of rascals, little thieves and great,
Dealers in watered milk and watered stocks,
Who lead us lambs to pasture on the rocks,—
Shepherds — Jack Sheppards — of their city flocks,—
The rings of rogues that rob the luckless town,
Those evil angels creeping up and down
The Jacob's ladder of the treasury stairs,—
Not stage, but real Turpins and Macaires,—
Could doff, like us, their knavery with their clothes,
And find it easy as forgetting oaths!

Welcome, thrice welcome to our virgin dome,
The Muses' shrine, the Drama's new-found home!
Here shall the Statesman rest his weary brain,
The worn-out Artist find his wits again;
Here Trade forget his ledger and his cares,
And sweet communion mingle Bulls and Bears;
Here shall the youthful Lover, nestling near
The shrinking maiden, her he holds most dear,
Gaze on the mimic moonlight as it falls
On painted groves, on sliding canvas walls,
And sigh, "My angel! What a life of bliss
We two could live in such a world as this!"
Here shall the timid pedants of the schools,
The gilded boors, the labor-scorning fools,
The grass-green rustic and the smoke-dried cit,
Feel each in turn the stinging lash of wit,
And as it tingles on some tender part
Each find a balsam in his neighbor's smart;
So every folly prove a fresh delight
As in the picture of our play to-night.

Farewell! The Players wait the Prompter's call;
Friends, lovers, listeners! Welcome one and all!

A SEA DIALOGUE

Cabin Passenger. *Man at Wheel.*

CABIN PASSENGER.

FRIEND, you seem thoughtful. I not wonder much
That he who sails the ocean should be sad.
I am myself reflective. When I think

Of all this wallowing beast, the Sea, has sucked
Between his sharp, thin lips, the wedgy waves,
What heaps of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearls;
What piles of shekels, talents, ducats, crowns,
What bales of Tyrian mantles, Indian shawls,
Of laces that have blanked the weavers' eyes,
Of silken tissues, wrought by worm and man,
The half-starved workman, and the well-fed worm;
What marbles, bronzes, pictures, parchments, books;
What many-lobuled, thought-engendering brains;
Lie with the gaping sea-shells in his maw, —
I, too, am silent; for all language seems
A mockery, and the speech of man is vain.
O mariner, we look upon the waves
And they rebuke our babbling. "Peace!" they say, —
"Mortal, be still!" My noisy tongue is hushed,
And with my trembling finger on my lips
My soul exclaims in ecstasy —

MAN AT WHEEL.

Belay!

CABIN PASSENGER.

Ah yes! "Delay," — it calls, "nor haste to break
The charm of stillness with an idle word!"
O mariner, I love thee, for thy thought
Strides even with my own, nay, flies before.
Thou art a brother to the wind and wave;
Have they not music for thine ear as mine,
When the wild tempest makes thy ship his lyre,
Smiting a cavernous basso from the shrouds
And climbing up his gamut through the stays,

Through buntlines, bowlines, ratlines, till it shrills
An alto keener than the locust sings,
And all the great Æolian orchestra
Storms out its mad sonata in the gale?
Is not the scene a wondrous and —

MAN AT WHEEL.

A vast!

CABIN PASSENGER.

Ah yes, a vast, a vast and wondrous scene!
I see thy soul is open as the day
That holds the sunshine in its azure bowl
To all the solemn glories of the deep.
Tell me, O mariner, dost thou never feel
The grandeur of thine office, — to control
The keel that cuts the ocean like a knife
And leaves a wake behind it like a seam
In the great shining garment of the world?

MAN AT WHEEL.

Belay y'r jaw, y' swab! y' hoss-marine!
(*To the Captain.*)
Ay, ay, Sir! Stiddy, Sir! Sou'wes' b' sou'!

November 10, 1864.

CHANSON WITHOUT MUSIC

BY THE PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF DEAD AND LIVE LANGUAGES

PHI BETA KAPPA. — CAMBRIDGE, 1867

You bid me sing, — can I forget
The classic ode of days gone by, —

How belle Fifine and jeune Lisette
Exclaimed, "Anacreōn, gerōn ei"?
"Regardez donc," those ladies said, —
"You 're getting bald and wrinkled too:
When summer's roses all are shed,
Love 's nullum ite, voyez-vous!"

In vain ce brave Anacreon's cry,
"Of Love alone my banjo sings"
(Erōta mounon). "Etiam si, —
Eh b'en?" replied the saucy things, —
"Go find a maid whose hair is gray,
And strike your lyre, — we sha'n't complain:
But parce nobis, s'il vous plaît, —
Voilà Adolphe! Voilà Eugène!"

Ah, jeune Lisette! Ah, belle Fifine!
Anacreon's lesson all must learn;
O kairos oxūs; Spring is green,
But Acer Hyems waits his turn!
I hear you whispering from the dust,
"Tiens, mon cher, c'est toujours so, —
The brightest blade grows dim with rust,
The fairest meadow white with snow!"

You do not mean it! *Not* encore?
Another string of playday rhymes?
You 've heard me — nonne est? — before,
Multoties, — more than twenty times;
Non possum, — vraiment, — pas du tout,
I cannot! I am loath to shirk;

But who will listen if I do,
My memory makes such shocking work?

Ginōsko. Scio. Yes, I 'm told
Some ancients like my rusty lay,
As Grandpa Noah loved the old
Red-sandstone march of Jubal's day.
I used to carol like the birds,
But time my wits has quite unfixed,
Et quoad verba, — for my words, —
Ciel! Eheu! Whe-ew! — how they 're mixed!

Mehercle! Zeu! Diable! how
My thoughts were dressed when I was young,
But tempus fugit! see them now
Half clad in rags of every tongue!
O philoi, fratres, chers amis!
I dare not court the youthful Muse,
For fear her sharp response should be,
"Papa Anacreon, please excuse!"

Adieu! I 've trod my annual track
How long! — let others count the miles, —
And peddled out my rhyming pack
To friends who always paid in smiles.
So, laissez-moi! some youthful wit
No doubt has wares he wants to show;
And I am asking, "Let me sit,"
Dum ille clamat, "Dos pou sto!"

FOR THE CENTENNIAL DINNER

OF THE PROPRIETORS OF BOSTON PIER, OR THE LONG WHARF, APRIL 16, 1873

DEAR friends, we are strangers; we never before
Have suspected what love to each other we bore;
But each of us all to his neighbor is dear,
Whose heart has a throb for our time-honored pier.

As I look on each brother proprietor's face,
I could open my arms in a loving embrace;
What wonder that feelings, undreamed of so long,
Should burst all at once in a blossom of song!

While I turn my fond glance on the monarch of piers,
Whose throne has stood firm through his eightscore of years,
My thought travels backward and reaches the day
When they drove the first pile on the edge of the bay.

See! The joiner, the shipwright, the smith from his forge,
The redcoat, who shoulders his gun for King George,
The shopman, the 'prentice, the boys from the lane,
The parson, the doctor with gold-headed cane,

Come trooping down King Street, where now may
be seen
The pulleys and ropes of a mighty machine;
The weight rises slowly; it drops with a thud;
And, lo! the great timber sinks deep in the mud!

They are gone, the stout craftsmen that hammered
the piles,
And the square-toed old boys in the three-cornered
tiles;
The breeches, the buckles, have faded from view,
And the parson's white wig and the ribbon-tied
queue.

The redcoats have vanished; the last grenadier
Stepped into the boat from the end of our pier;
They found that our hills were not easy to climb,
And the order came, "Countermarch, double-quick
time!"

They are gone, friend and foe, — anchored fast at
the pier,
Whence no vessel brings back its pale passengers
here;
But our wharf, like a lily, still floats on the flood,
Its breast in the sunshine, its roots in the mud.

Who — who that has loved it so long and so well —
The flower of his birthright would barter or sell?
No: pride of the bay, while its ripples shall run,
You shall pass, as an heirloom, from father to
son!

Let me part with the acres my grandfather bought,
With the bonds that my uncle's kind legacy brought,
With my bank-shares, — old "Union," whose ten per cent stock
Stands stiff through the storms as the Eddystone rock;

With my rights (or my wrongs) in the "Erie," — alas!
With my claims on the mournful and "Mutual Mass.;"
With my "Phil. Wil. and Balt.," with my "C. B. and Q.;"
But I never, no never, will sell out of you.

We drink to thy past and thy future to-day,
Strong right arm of Boston, stretched out o'er the bay.
May the winds waft the wealth of all nations to thee,
And thy dividends flow like the waves of the sea!

A POEM SERVED TO ORDER

PHI BETA KAPPA, JUNE 26, 1873

THE Caliph ordered up his cook,
And, scowling with a fearful look
That meant, — We stand no gammon,—
"To-morrow, just at two," he said,
"Hassan, our cook, will lose his head,
Or serve us up a salmon."

"Great sire," the trembling *chef* replied,
"Lord of the Earth and all beside,
Sun, Moon, and Stars, and so on" —
(Look in Eothen, — there you 'll find
A list of titles. Never mind;
I have n't time to go on:)

"Great sire," and so forth, thus he spoke,
"Your Highness must intend a joke;
It does n't stand to reason
For one to order salmon brought,
Unless that fish is sometimes caught,
And also is in season.

"Our luck of late is shocking bad,
In fact, the latest catch we had
(We kept the matter shady),
But, hauling in our nets, — alack!
We found no salmon, but a sack
That held your honored Lady!"

"Allah is great!" the Caliph said,
"My poor Zuleika, you are dead,
I once took interest in you."
"Perhaps, my Lord, you 'd like to know
We cut the lines and let her go."
"Allah be praised! Continue."

"It is n't hard one's hook to bait,
And, squatting down, to watch and wait,
To see the cork go under;

At last suppose you 've got your bite,
You twitch away with all your might, —
You 've hooked an eel, by thunder! "

The Caliph patted Hassan's head:
"Slave, thou hast spoken well," he said,
"And won thy master's favor.
Yes; since what happened t' other morn
The salmon of the Golden Horn
Might have a doubtful flavor.

"That last remark about the eel
Has also justice that we feel
Quite to our satisfaction.
To-morrow we dispense with fish,
And, for the present, if you wish,
You 'll keep your bulbous fraction."

"Thanks! thanks!" the grateful *chef* replied,
His nutrient feature showing wide
The gleam of arches dental:
"To cut my head off would n't pay,
I find it useful every day,
As well as ornamental."

Brothers, I hope you will not fail
To see the moral of my tale
And kindly to receive it.
You know your anniversary pie
Must have its crust, though hard and dry,
And some prefer to leave it.

How oft before these youths were born
I 've fished in Fancy's Golden Horn
For what the Muse might send me!
How gayly then I cast the line,
When all the morning sky was mine,
And Hope her flies would lend me!

And now I hear our despot's call,
And come, like Hassan, to the hall, —
If there 's a slave, I am one, —
My bait no longer flies, but worms!
I 've caught — Lord bless me! how he squirms!
An eel, and not a salmon!

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

READ AT THE MEETING OF THE HARVARD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, JUNE 25, 1873

THE fount the Spaniard sought in vain
Through all the land of flowers
Leaps glittering from the sandy plain
Our classic grove embowers;
Here youth, unchanging, blooms and smiles,
Here dwells eternal spring,
And warm from Hope's elysian isles
The winds their perfume bring.

Here every leaf is in the bud,
Each singing throat in tune,
And bright o'er evening's silver flood
Shines the young crescent moon.

What wonder Age forgets his staff
  And lays his glasses down,
And gray-haired grandsires look and laugh
  As when their locks were brown!

With ears grown dull and eyes grown dim
  They greet the joyous day
That calls them to the fountain's brim
  To wash their years away.
What change has clothed the ancient sire
  In sudden youth? For, lo!
The Judge, the Doctor, and the Squire
  Are Jack and Bill and Joe!

And be his titles what they will,
  In spite of manhood's claim
The graybeard is a school-boy still
  And loves his school-boy name;
It calms the ruler's stormy breast
  Whom hurrying care pursues,
And brings a sense of peace and rest,
  Like slippers after shoes.

And what are all the prizes won
  To youth's enchanted view?
And what is all the man has done
  To what the boy may do?
O blessed fount, whose waters flow
  Alike for sire and son,
That melts our winter's frost and snow
  And makes all ages one!

I pledge the sparkling fountain's tide,
That flings its golden shower
With age to fill and youth to guide,
Still fresh in morning flower!
Flow on with ever-widening stream,
In ever-brightening morn, —
Our story's pride, our future's dream,
The hope of times unborn!

NO TIME LIKE THE OLD TIME

THERE is no time like the old time, when you and
I were young,
When the buds of April blossomed, and the birds
of spring-time sung!
The garden's brightest glories by summer suns are
nursed,
But oh, the sweet, sweet violets, the flowers that
opened first!

There is no place like the old place, where you and
I were born,
Where we lifted first our eyelids on the splendors
of the morn
From the milk-white breast that warmed us, from
the clinging arms that bore,
Where the dear eyes glistened o'er us that will
look on us no more!

There is no friend like the old friend, who has
shared our morning days,
No greeting like his welcome, no homage like his
praise:

Fame is the scentless sunflower, with gaudy crown
of gold;
But friendship is the breathing rose, with sweets in
every fold.

There is no love like the old love, that we courted
in our pride;
Though our leaves are falling, falling, and we 're
fading side by side,
There are blossoms all around us with the colors of
our dawn,
And we live in borrowed sunshine when the day-
star is withdrawn.

There are no times like the old times, — they shall
never be forgot!
There is no place like the old place, — keep green
the dear old spot!
There are no friends like our old friends, — may
Heaven prolong their lives!
There are no loves like our old loves, — God bless
our loving wives!

1865.

A HYMN OF PEACE

SUNG AT THE "JUBILEE," JUNE 15, 1869, TO THE MUSIC OF KELLER'S "AMERICAN HYMN"

ANGEL of Peace, thou hast wandered too long!
Spread thy white wings to the sunshine of love!
Come while our voices are blended in song, —
Fly to our ark like the storm-beaten dove!

Fly to our ark on the wings of the dove, —
  Speed o'er the far-sounding billows of song,
Crowned with thine olive-leaf garland of love, —
  Angel of Peace, thou hast waited too long!

Joyous we meet, on this altar of thine
  Mingling the gifts we have gathered for thee,
Sweet with the odors of myrtle and pine,
  Breeze of the prairie and breath of the sea,—
Meadow and mountain and forest and sea!
  Sweet is the fragrance of myrtle and pine,
Sweeter the incense we offer to thee,
  Brothers once more round this altar of thine!

Angels of Bethlehem, answer the strain!
  Hark! a new birth-song is filling the sky!—
Loud as the storm-wind that tumbles the main
  Bid the full breath of the organ reply, —
Let the loud tempest of voices reply, —
  Roll its long surge like the earth-shaking main!
Swell the vast song till it mounts to the sky!—
  Angels of Bethlehem, echo the strain!

NOTES.

Pages 17 and 18. THE BOYS.

The members of the Harvard College class of 1829 referred to in this poem are: "Doctor," Francis Thomas; "Judge," G. T. Bigelow, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts; "Speaker," Hon. Francis B. Crowninshield, Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives; "Mr. Mayor," G. W. Richardson, of Worcester, Mass.; "Member of Congress," Hon. George T. Davis; "Reverend," James Freeman Clarke; "boy with the grave mathematical look," Benjamin Peirce; "boy with a three-decker brain," Judge Benjamin R. Curtis, of the Supreme Court of the United States; "nice youngster of excellent pith," S. F. Smith, author of "My Country, 't is of Thee."

Page 81. *That lovely, bright-eyed boy.*

William Sturgis.

Page 82. *Who faced the storm so long.*

Francis B. Crowninshield.

Page 82. *Our many-featured friend.*

George T. Davis.

Page 110. *The close-clinging dulcamara.*

The "bitter-sweet" of New England is the *Celastrus scandens*, "bourreau des arbres" of the Canadian French.

Page 221. *All armed with picks and spades.*

The captured slaves were at this time organized as pioneers.